

GCC chief urges Iran to end row over islands

DUBAI (R) — The head of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has urged Iran to respond to peace initiatives to resolve a dispute with council member United Arab Emirates (UAE) over three Gulf islands. "It is in the interest of Iran to accept such proposals as its gains from boosting GCC confidence outweigh those of its occupation (of the islands)," said GCC Secretary-General Jameel Hujailan in comments published on Saturday by UAE's Al Itihad daily. The UAE has urged Iran to agree to take the row over the islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa to the International Court of Justice. Iran says its sovereignty over the islands is not negotiable but has called for bilateral talks with the UAE to clear up any "misunderstandings." The two sides held talks in Abu Dhabi in 1992 but these did not resolve the dispute.

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King visits Badia and Border Police

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein, the supreme commander of the Armed Forces, on Saturday called at the Badia and Border Police. The King presided over a meeting attended by Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Abdul Karim Kabariti, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai, the King's Adviser on Tribal Affairs Hameid Al Fayez and Public Security Department Chief General Nasouh Muheideen.

Kabariti, Sheikh Sabah exchange views

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on Saturday received a telephone call from Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah during which they exchanged views concerning the latest developments at the regional and Arab levels. Mr. Kabariti congratulated Sheikh Sabah on his reappointment to his post and the Kuwaiti minister voiced appreciation of His Majesty King Hussein's policies with regard to various issues.

Mirai meets Peay

AMMAN (Petra) — Chairman of the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai received on Saturday at the General Headquarters of the Armed Forces head of the U.S. Central Command, Lieutenant General Binford Peay. The two sides reviewed the situation in the region and Jordanian-U.S. cooperation and coordination.

Hariri starts work on new cabinet

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's newly appointed Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri began consultations on Saturday with parliamentary deputies on forming a new government. Mr. Hariri, who was appointed on Thursday for a third term of office, must consult all the deputies on the composition of the cabinet. He has said he wants to finish consultations on Sunday and political sources expect the new cabinet by mid-week. Mr. Hariri told a mass meeting of businessmen and politicians on Saturday the new government must work as a team and he would not allow any opposition within the cabinet. Political sources expected most members of the outgoing 29-member cabinet to be reappointed. Mr. Hariri, whose previous two governments have wrestled with massive budget deficits, told the mass meeting he would not consider changing a law introduced in 1994 that lowered direct personal and corporate taxes to 10 per cent. He also said he would tolerate no speculation against the Lebanese pound which has appreciated steadily against the U.S. dollar since he first took office in October 1993.

Egypt tries 10 arms smugglers

ASSIUT (R) — Eight Egyptians and two Sudanese went on trial in a military court in the southern city of Assiut on Saturday on charges of smuggling weapons and ammunition from Sudan. Security sources said. They said five of the men, including the two Sudanese, are being tried in absentia. The army says the men had planned to sell the arms in Egypt. The sources said the men smuggled 46 Kalashnikov rifles and more than 5,000 rounds across the border earlier this year.

Hebron talks get ahead despite recriminations

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The Palestine National Authority (PNA) on Saturday blamed Israel for lack of progress in talks on a Hebron troop withdrawal and said the Palestinians would not agree to change "even a comma" in peace agreements already signed with Israel.

The accusations came a day after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the Palestinians had yet to make it clear whether they had abandoned violence and were committed to peace.

Despite the recriminations, U.S.-brokered talks on a Hebron troop pullback were to resume Saturday evening. Palestinian Higher Education Minister Hanan Ashrawi said: "The talks have reached an impasse because of Israel's refusal to implement the accords already signed."

She added that current Israeli government's policy of expanding Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip was a "serious threat to the peace process."

After a meeting with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, U.S. peace envoy Dennis Ross said: "I hope we will see a final agree-

Ross briefs King on progress

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein on Saturday received a telephone call from American Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross, who briefed him on the latest developments in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations on security and civilian affairs.

Mr. Ross told the King that the gap between Israel and the Palestinians had narrowed and that a meeting was scheduled to be held at the American ambassador's residence in Tel Aviv Saturday evening attended by heads of delegations in a bid to overcome the obstacles and to reach an agreement on the redeployment of Israeli forces in Hebron.

ment as soon as possible. I believe that very serious efforts have been made to overcome differences."

Mahmoud Abbas, Mr. Arafat's deputy, who took part in Friday's late-night talks, agreed saying "progress had been made." But he added that "there are still problems to resolve."

The negotiations were also overshadowed by fresh warnings that the Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad planned to carry out attacks in Israel to mark a year since the assassination of its leader, Fathi Shaqaqi.

Israel is widely believed to have had a hand in the killing, though it never claimed responsibility.

Speaking in a Palestinian refugee camp near the Syrian capital of Damascus, the new Islamic Jihad leader, Ramadan Abdullah Shal-

lah, said Friday that the group would carry out attacks across Israel to avenge Shaqaqi.

Compounding Israeli concerns over a possible attack, the head of the Shin Bet security service, Ami Ayalon, said Friday that PNA security forces were doing less than in the past to try and prevent attacks on Israelis.

Israeli-Palestinian cooperation on security a cornerstone of the peace agreements, and PNA policemen have thwarted attacks in the past, arresting suicide bombers before they reached Israel.

Mr. Netanyahu, responding to the assessment by the Shin Bet chief, said the PNA apparently had not yet abandoned the option

(Continued on page 7)

Talabani links peace with KDP to return of revenues

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), has linked his readiness to reach peace with a rival Iraqi Kurdish group to the return of revenue to the regional government.

Mr. Talabani, in an interview published here Saturday in the Al Sharq Al Awsat newspaper, also said he would not meet with Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) leader Massud Barzani at this week's PUK-KDP talks in Turkey.

Mr. Talabani expressed "optimism," however, about finding a settlement to the conflict in northern Iraq and said the United States was "eager and serious" in its attempts to resolve the dispute.

The PUK and KDP agreed to a ceasefire Wednesday at U.S.-mediated talks and representatives of the two groups are to hold direct talks this week with Turkish, U.S. and British mediation.

The PUK leader, interviewed by telephone from Tehran, said he had no reservations "on what could

be achieved through the U.S.-mediated ceasefire" between his group and the KDP.

"There is no ceiling for implementing what could be agreed upon," he said.

The PUK leader stressed, however, the "importance of (the KDP) returning back all the money and revenues to the central (Kurdistan) government."

He also called for the formation of a regional government "which represents all factions, including the (minority) Turcomen, and preparations for holding new elections."

Meanwhile the rival Kurdish factions respected the U.S.-brokered ceasefire in northern Iraq on Saturday, with a few minor exceptions, as Baghdad again warned Tehran to stop meddling in the conflict.

"The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan forces have fired automatic weapons at our positions," KDP fighter Azad Kamal Hamad told AFP.

"Despite the sporadic shooting, we are following our leader's decision and maintaining the ceasefire,"

said the fighter, who is stationed in the Wadi Balisane area, northeast of Sulaimaniyah.

The PUK and KDP have controlled northern Iraq since the end of the Gulf war in 1991 but they fell out in 1994 over power-sharing and tax revenues.

The latest round of violence erupted on Aug. 31 when the KDP seized the Kurdistan capital Erbil on Aug. 31 with Baghdad's help.

The United States launched a wave of missile strikes against Iraq for intervening in the Kurdish "safe haven" set up by U.S.-led allied forces.

Mr. Barzani has accused the PUK of receiving Iranian support in a counter-offensive launched in mid-October.

Mr. Talabani also accused Mr. Barzani of "turning northern Iraq into a mass grave for the members of the Iraqi opposition ... after the destruction of its offices in Erbil by the Iraqi army and its security forces."

(Continued on page 7)

Dostum sends his warplanes into action against Taleban

TOUTAKHON, Afghanistan (Agencies) — Jet fighters belonging to northern warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum bombed Taleban positions northeast of Kabul twice Saturday, sources here said.

Former government soldiers stationed in forward positions in this village some 25 kilometres north-east of Kabul, said there were two separate raids some two hours apart involving a single aircraft each time.

Rockets also hit the airport in Kabul, held for the past month by the Taleban, witnesses said. Taleban fighters denied the rockets

struck within the perimeter. It was not immediately clear who fired the rockets or whether they had caused any significant damage.

"(Dostum) jets from the north went over this morning," Dr. Abdullah, spokesman for former government military chief Ahmad Shah Masood told reporters in the town of Jalal Os-Siraj, 70 kilometres north of Kabul.

The Taleban, opening a second front after weeks of trying to mollify General Dostum, attacked Dostum forces in Badghis province on Thursday. There was no independent word on claims they had overrun

districts in northwestern province of Badghis and in neighbouring Faryab province.

Taleban-controlled Radio Afghanistan, renamed Voice of Sharia, said the offensive was continuing.

"The so-called Defence Council of Afghanistan wanted to disrupt the peaceful life of people in Badghis province and by doing so wanted to continue their growing pressure on people," official Radio Afghanistan said on Saturday.

The defence council was set up two weeks ago formally linking Gen. Dostum and Mr. Masood.



RAINS TAKE THEIR TOLL: A man walks on a railway track after the bridge on which it was located was washed away by floodwaters in Singavakkonda, a town in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. More than 30 people died due to the floods and cyclonic rains last week and properties worth millions of dollars have been destroyed (Reuters photo)

Government schools to teach Christianity as a religion

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on Saturday discussed financial problems facing the Ministry of Education during a meeting with the heads of the ministry's departments attended by Minister of Education Munther Al Masri.

One of the key outcome of the meeting was a decision to introduce the teaching of Christianity as a religion at government schools.

Mr. Kabariti said that the ministry should seek a bal-

ance between ambitious programmes and the state's financial capabilities.

Mr. Kabariti said the government appreciated the international organisations like the World Bank and also the Japanese government for their continued assistance to Jordan.

expressing hope that the government would be able to overcome obstacles impeding the implementation of educational projects.

Religious education, the prime minister said, is a basic subject in the educa-

tional process but it does not mean Islamic education alone.

"I hope you will understand that religious education — Islamic or Christian — complement each other in seeking common objectives because Islamic or Christian religious teachings are a back-up for the whole educational process," Mr. Kabariti said.

He said the ministry should overcome difficulties in introducing the teaching of Christianity as a religion for Christian stu-

dents in government schools.

Only Islamic religion has been taught Muslim students in government schools.

Before the meeting with the ministry officials, Mr. Kabariti met Dr. Masri, who briefed him on the ministry's projects. Discussions also covered the ministry's plans for expanding vocational training, creating teachers' clubs and the creation of a teachers' (Continued on page 7)

Israel says Golan oil drilling plan scrapped

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Plans by Israel's National Oil Company to drill for oil on the occupied Golan Heights have been cancelled because the company will soon be privatised, an official said Saturday.

after Syria strongly criticised the project. "The exploration programmes, including those on the Golan, were cancelled because of the government's recent decision to privatise the National Oil Company," said the spokesman of the infrastructure ministry, headed by hardline rightist Ariel Sharon. She added that she had not seen Syrian protests over the drilling.

Syria said Saturday drilling for oil on the Golan by the Jewish state was a "dangerous escalation."

"The green light given by (Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu to oil exploration in the Golan consti-

tutes a dangerous escalation by Israel and threatens the security, peace and stability of the region," the Syrian government newspaper Tishrin said.

Tishrin accused the Israeli government of trying to "deliberately sabotage what little hope of peace remains by this stupid decision which shows up Israel's real plans for the Golan."

The Russian ambassador to Syria, Victor Gogitidze, said at a news conference in Damascus: "Our position is very negative concerning this provocative decision which certainly does not bring the Arabs and Israel closer together."

The Israeli newspaper Haaretz said Friday that Mr. Netanyahu had given the National Oil Company permission to start drilling on the strategic plateau, annexed by Israel in 1981.


(Continued on page 7)

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U.S. says willingness for talks with Iran is not shift in policy

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States reaffirmed on Friday its long-standing willingness to begin a dialogue with Iran on such issues as terrorism and its nuclear intentions.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said comments on the subject on Thursday by Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau in Dubai did not represent a policy change. Mr. Pelletreau told a gathering of businessmen that the United States is "open to dialogue" with Iran.

"Sometimes you do need to talk to your adversaries, you do need to talk to governments with which you have little in common because it's a way to communicate if those communications can be useful," Mr. Burns said.

"We don't right now have these diplomatic conversations because the Iranians haven't taken us up on this long-standing, multi-year U.S. policy," he said.

Mr. Burns said the American willingness to communicate with Iran does not mean the United States and Iran are in agreement on Iran.

"The Europeans have a very different policy," he said. "Most of them have diplomatic representation in Tehran, they have a normal diplomatic relationship, they have a very active commercial relationship."

He said there is not a shred of evidence that the critical dialogue between Europe and Iran has succeeded because Iran continues to support terrorism in the Middle East and has a weapons programme "which will pose a threat to all countries in the future."

Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani charged Friday that the United States was "a wolf in sheep's clothing" and could not be trusted to sponsor peace alone in the Middle East.

"The U.S. is an Israeli rejection of an expanded role for

France in Europe in the Middle East," he said in a sermon at Tehran university.

Mr. Rafsanjani said that French President Jacques Chirac's tour of the Middle East this week marked Europe's political return to the Middle East.

"The peoples of the region have seen that the United States is not a friend of the Arabs," he said. Mr. Rafsanjani argued that Washington does not have the right to play the role of honest-broker as it is Israel's closest ally.

"The refusal of Israel to accept the mediation of Europe showed that this regime does not want peace," he charged.

Turning to the Kurdish fighting in northern Iraq, Mr. Rafsanjani hoped the ceasefire between the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), although mediated by the United States, would hold.

The situation in Iraq-Kurdistan affects Iran's security, he said.

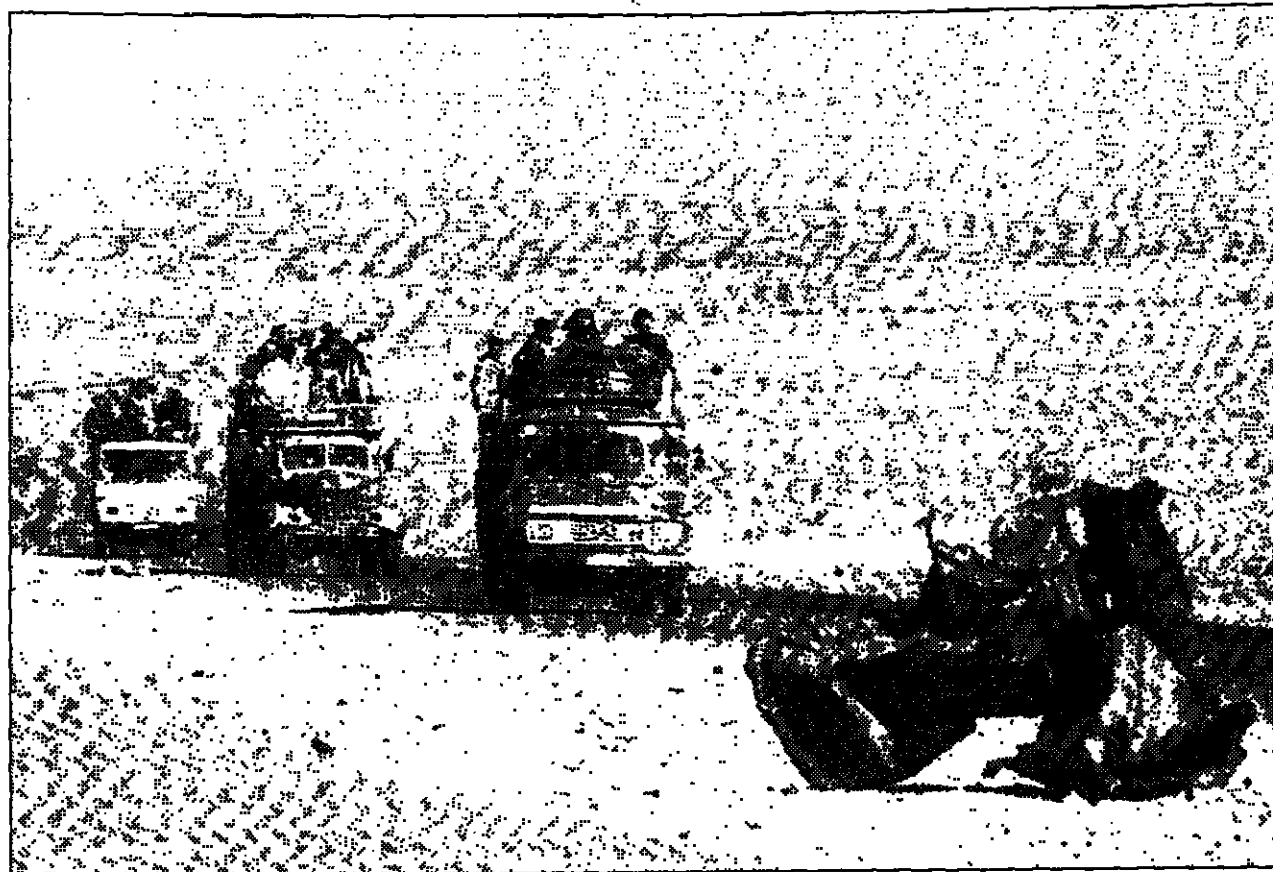
"We are defending our borders and the arrival of hundreds of thousands of refugees would be a source of pressure and insecurity for us," Mr. Rafsanjani said, referring to Iraqi Kurds escaping the fighting.

He said Iran was working to stop the clashes, although he implicitly recognised Tehran's support for the PUK.

"If a party comes to Iran, it is only natural they should be able to go back to Kurdistan and recover their territories," he said, in recognition that the PUK had launched its counter-attack from across the border two weeks ago.

Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati has said U.S. mediation was bound to fail, but the ceasefire since mid-

night Wednesday has largely been holding, according to U.N. officials in northern Iraq.



Trucks carrying Afghan refugees drive past the remains of a tank on a road 15 kilometres north of Kabul Saturday amid continuing battles between the Taliban militia and forces of powerful northern leader Abdul Rashid Dostum in the remote north-west of the country (Reuters photo)

Save the Children threatens to stop Afghan aid

KABUL (AFP) — A major international humanitarian agency on Saturday threatened to suspend aid projects affected by a Taliban ban on women working and girls going to school.

Save the Children also called on other aid groups to halt educational and non-emergency aid projects in areas of Afghanistan where women are discriminated against in schools and offices.

"Save the Children cannot discriminate either with regard to employment opportunities provided to men and women or educational opportunities offered to girls and boys," the group said in a statement.

"Unless the present discriminatory policies change, Save the Children will have to suspend those programmes directly affected by official restrictions on women's employment and girls' education. We strongly urge all Afghan parties to ensure equal opportunity for employment and education in

order that all Afghans — men, women, boys and girls — may continue to actively participate in the country's development," it added.

The call came a month after the ultra-fundamentalist Taliban overran the once relatively modern Afghan capital, imposing their strict brand of Islamic law on the city.

The militia captured the Afghan capital on Sept. 27 after the ousted government of ex-President Burhanuddin Rabbani fled the city. The militia had laid siege to the city for 11 months.

One of the warriors' first acts was to close girls' schools and ban women from working, while ordering females to fully cover themselves when going out, but not to leave their homes "unnecessarily."

The move put tens of thousands of women — many of them the sole breadwinners of their families — out of work and halted learning for the capital's girls and sparked alarm among Kabul's and the

world community.

The call by Save the Children, which runs mine awareness as well as school education programmes for children.

It urged the international community to ensure the right of women to study and work on the same basis as men, their right to work outside the home and their right to a safe and secure environment.

The group also added that it would continue to try to develop programmes all over Afghanistan in a bid to help the impoverished country's children.

Afghanistan has been torn apart by almost 18 years of constant war, a conflict which has left the country crippled and has hundreds of thousands of children orphans.

The Taliban, who sprang up from Pakistan's Koranic schools two years ago, have vowed they will impose their rigid Islamic rule on the whole of Afghanistan and wipe out war, crime and corruption.

The aid group — which has British, U.S. and Swedish branches operating in Afghanistan — called on its

aid colleagues to support its stand and to suspend programmes where females are denied access to education and work by the authorities.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Peres to visit Egypt today

CAIRO (AFP) — former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres is to visit Egypt on Sunday for talks with President Hosni Mubarak on the Middle East peace process, the government daily Al Ahran newspaper reported in its early Saturday edition. The newspaper, in a report from its correspondent in Gaza, quoted Egypt's ambassador to Israel Mohammad Bassioni as saying that Mr. Peres will spend several hours in Egypt. Mr. Peres, the Israeli labour opposition leader, is also expected to meet Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa and the top presidential advisor Osama Al Baz to discuss the latest developments in the peace process.

Egyptian 'rare' relics are fakes

CAIRO (AFP) — A senior Egyptian official who went to London seeking the return of 74 rare archaeological relics has been disappointed when it turned out they were fakes, the government daily Al Ahran has said. The newspaper, in a report from London in its early Saturday edition, quoted Attorney General Hisham Saraya as saying that the small 74 Oshebt statues which were found in tombs were copies of the originals. "They are all fakes and not ancient," Mr. Saraya told Al Ahran, ruling out original plans to submit an official request to the British authorities to recover the statues. But Mr. Saraya, who left for London earlier this month, said Egypt would nevertheless pursue efforts to recover more than 31 other rare pieces which he said were illegally smuggled out of the country.

Greek Cypriot wounds self in shooting

NICOSIA (R) — A Greek Cypriot soldier shot and wounded himself on Saturday in a post near the ceasefire line dividing the island, Cypriot officials said. "The wound was self-inflicted," Defence Ministry spokesman Andreas Charides told Reuters. "It was a single shot and it is not serious." The soldier was found by other soldiers at 5.20 a.m. (0220 GMT) at Avgorou village in south-eastern Cyprus. Two weeks ago a Greek Cypriot from Avgorou was fatally shot by Turkish forces after he wandered across the buffer zone looking for snails.

Moroccan jobless threaten hunger strike

RABAT (R) — Eight-hundred jobless Moroccan graduates who started a sit-in in a union headquarters in Rabat on Friday threatened an indefinite hunger strike to push for jobs, a spokesman said. "At present, we are 800 jobless graduates but more people are joining our movement every day from all over the country before the indefinite hunger strike starts," a spokesman for the National Association of Jobless Graduates said on Friday. The group called on the authorities "to open a constructive dialogue" in order to solve their urgent problems. "Despite our previous sit-ins, hunger strikes and the ongoing social talks between union and the government, the unemployment issue remains marginalised," the spokesman added. The government has recently agreed to a minimum wage increase of 10 per cent and other social benefits after months of talks with opposition unions. Last May, an estimated 2,000 jobless graduates went on a three-weeks sit-in and hunger strike at the headquarters of the Moroccan Labour Union (UMT) in protest against what they said was the government's failure to provide them with jobs. Finance Minister Mohammed Kabbaj recently said the only way to tackle unemployment, officially at 17 per cent of the workforce, was rapid economic growth.

Algerian suspect brought to Belgium

BRUSSELS (R) — A suspected Algerian fundamentalist wanted over a grenade attack last December on police in southern Belgium has been extradited to Belgium from the Netherlands, Belgian media said on Friday. Quoting sources close to the inquiry, Le Soir newspaper said the man was also thought to be connected to a fatal bombing at a Paris metro station in July 1995, blamed by French authorities on Algerian extremists. Eight people were killed and 86 injured when a gas-canister bomb exploded on a rush hour train at the crowded Saint-Michel underground station. Le Soir identified the man only as Nouredine, suspected of being a leader in the Algerian fundamentalist group GIA. It said he was also known under several other names. The Belgian foreign ministry said it had no information on the affair, but noted that extraditions within Benelux countries were conducted directly between public prosecutors' offices and did not involve the ministry. Belgian television news showed film of a man they identified as Nouredine.

Mothers of world's missing join Turkish protest

ISTANBUL (R) — Mothers of missing persons from the world's trouble-spots and Western rights workers joined a 75-week protest by mothers of Turkey's "disappeared" of Saturday to highlight claims of extrajudicial killings by the police.

"As a mother of a missing person, the mothers here are in my heart. We are here to support these mothers and to protest to those in politics and in government who stay silent on this matter," said Mira Baraville, whose daughter, Ana Maria, disappeared while pregnant during Argentina's "dirty war" of the 1970s.

Human rights organisations accuse the security forces in Turkey of conducting a similar campaign now against suspected

rebel Kurds and their sympathisers and far-left organisations.

Flown into Turkey by rights group Amnesty International, mothers from Argentina, Bosnia and Lebanon held up pictures of their missing relatives alongside Turkey's "Saturday mothers" in their weekly protest in one of Istanbul's busiest high streets.

Turkey's Human Rights Association says 12 people "disappeared" in August. The figures were the latest available.

"My son, a 30-year-old teacher, was arrested by police on 21 March, 1995 on his way home (in Istanbul) and six days later his body was found in the woods," said Baba Ucakca, demanding an end to "this dirty war in Turkey".

Hanim Tosun, holding up a

black-and white picture of her husband Fehmi, told how he was forced into a car by three armed men with walkie-talkies in 1995. She has not seen him since.

"Since 1991, there have been at least 100 such cases — these should be investigated," Carsten Jurgensen, spokesman for Amnesty International, told Reuters.

"There has to be some change in Turkish law which makes disappearances not possible any more," he said. "One of the things we ask for is to establish a commission which should at least investigate all the disappearances."

Amnesty launched a worldwide campaign this month to highlight human rights abuses in Turkey.

Turkish Foreign Minister Tansu

Chiller last week announced that Ankara would cut the period of detention in custody and make changes to the state security court system.

Suspects held under anti-terror laws can now be detained for up to a month in 10 emergency rule provinces in the mainly-Kurdish southeast and two weeks in the rest of Turkey.

But rights activists regularly criticise Turkey for failing to live up to previous promises to stamp out rights violations.

Despite Mrs. Chiller's pledge, the European Parliament voted this week to hold back hundreds of millions of dollars in European Union aid to Turkey because of its rights record.

Egyptian firms in Iraq to sell food, medicine

BAGHDAD (R) — Twenty-six Egyptian companies opened a trade exhibition in Baghdad on Saturday, seeking deals to sell millions of dollars worth of food and medical products when an oil-for-food deal with the U.N. takes effect. "We hope that we will be able to sign contracts with Iraqi traders and government establishments to bring foodstuffs and medicine in accordance with the United Nations resolutions," said Assam Al Khassab, head of representatives of the Egyptian firms attending the fair.

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PROGRAMME TWO

4:05... Fievels American Tails
4:30... You Bet Your Life
5:00... French Programmes
5:30... Science Magazine
6:00... The Famous Five (Drama)
6:15... News Flash
6:30... Our World Their World
6:45... Search and Rescue
7:00... French Programme
7:15... News Headlines
7:30... Fresh Prince of Bel-Air
7:45... Auto-Classics
8:00... The Album Show
8:15... Blake's Magic
8:30... News in English
8:45... Madison
9:00... Miami Vice
9:15... Yes Minister

PRAYERTIMES

04:25... Fair
05:44... (Sunrise) Doha
11:20... Dhuhir
14:27... 'Asr
16:56... Maghreb
18:13... 'Isha

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German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

Anglican Church Tel. 652826

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771531

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

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The Evangelical Local Church in

Queen promotes integrated review of children's needs

AMMAN (J.T.) — The National Association for the Education of the Child (NAEC) Saturday opened its seventh annual conference entitled "Extracurricular Education for Pre-School Children," opened by NAEC's Honorary President Her Majesty Queen Noor at the Royal Cultural Centre.

The Queen was accompanied by Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti. According to a Royal Court statement, the three-day regional conference aims to enhance pre-school children's scholastic training through educational activities for the family and local community as well as radio and television programmes and national and international children's book exhibitions.

These are hoped to be complemented by workshops and lectures in the field of child education.

According to the statement, the conference will also focus on strengthening the role of national and international non-governmental organisations as well as that of various mass media in expanding the base of beneficiaries of NAEC's training programme, the statement said.

Queen Noor, who later met with the conference participants, said that the conference promotes an integrated review of children's needs, which is the stated objective of the National Task Force for Children (NTFC) and the NTFC's National Coalition for Children (NCC). The latter has the goal of bringing together forces which shape children's early development such as schools, families, the media and public and private institutions, and works with them to address children's educational, psychological and social needs.

The Queen emphasised the importance of integrating families, mosques, schools and television programmes for children to fulfil their full intellectual, creative and social potential.

In his speech, the Minister of Education Dr. Munther Masri highlighted



Her Majesty Queen Noor Saturday attends the National Association for the Education of the Child (NAEC) annual conference. Also on the podium from left to right are Minister of Social Development Hammad Abu Jamous, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, Minister of Education Munther Masri, Mrs. Fatima Kabariti and Executive Director of Noor Al Hussein Foundation Ibrahim Badran (Petra photo)

the development of pre-school education in the Kingdom from 1952, saying that in the past 3 decades, "Jordanian universities have provided courses in child and pre-school education which have improved the qualifications and abilities of teachers."

He added that a reform in the 1994 Education Act stipulated that pre-school teachers have a university degree with additional in-service training and that "pre-school education has become a basic component of the educational ladder."

Dr. Masri concluded by saying that "there is a need to raise the total number of children in kindergartens, which now stands at 21 per cent of the respective age group (4-6 years olds)."

Minister of Social Development Hammad Abu Jamous said that according to recent studies, "30 per cent of children's mental development occurs in the first four years of their lives, which decreases to 30 per cent between 4-8 years and then to 20 per cent from 8-17 years."

He added that the Ministry of Social Development has supervised the establishment and accreditation of 557 kindergartens for 13,370 children as well as a total of 64 national

institutions which care for children who are impoverished or have special needs.

Mr. Abu Jamous said that the National Task Force for Children (NTFC), chaired by the Queen, aims to take a practical and scientific approach to develop model action programmes to address children's needs and rights.

Noor Al Hussein Foundation's (NHF) Executive Director Ibrahim Badran stated that Arab World delegates will participate for the first time in this conference.

Participants include researchers and specialists representing local and international organisations such as United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood in Cairo, Deputies of Labour and Social Development Ministries in the Gulf Cooperation Council, representatives of the Department for Women and Children's Welfare in Oman, professors from Jordanian, Egyptian, Iraqi and Palestinian universities as well as members of the media, the statement said.

The NAEC was established in 1986 in cooperation with the NHF to

"improve services rendered to pre-school children and to support children's programmes and educational institutions, especially kindergartens, nurseries, centres and clubs" by providing technical assistance, training and qualification courses, establishing children's libraries, promoting the publication of children's literature and supporting the production of radio and television programmes for children. Its Information and Documentation Centre prepares periodicals on children's issues and institutions, provides architectural designs and plans for child-friendly establishments and prepares standardised educational tests.

According to NAEC President Rinaid Al Khatib, the NAEC has launched comprehensive outreach programmes and workshop in the Jordan Valley, Ramtha, Jerash and Madaba for kindergarten teachers, which will be expanded to include/reach the country's remote rural and badia areas. She added that the NAEC plans to organise campaigns in support of the "less fortunate Arab child."

Former Minister of Social Development Salva Damen Masri and Mrs. Fatima Kabariti attended the opening ceremony.

Minister inspects work on new university hospital

RAMTHA (J.T.) — Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf Saturday inspected work progress on the new King Abdullah Hospital and training centre at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) near Ramtha.

She listened to an orientation regarding administrative and technical issues from University President Saad Hijazi, the Jordan News Agency, Petra reported.

Dr. Hijazi told the minister that the 16-floor hospital will initially house 650 beds which could be increased to accommodate 830 beds at a later date.

"Work on this [hospital] project started in 1994, is expected to be completed by the end of 1998 and is slated to be operated by a staff of 3,000 including doctors, nurses and other workers," he said.

He told the Jordan Times that Dr. Khalaf, who inspected the completed structure of the building, was briefed on technical requirements and medical equipment needed for the hospital work.

"JUST has updated the original hospital blueprint," said Dr. Hijazi citing as an example designs for an outpatient surgery unit which would

allow patients to be discharged the same day as their surgical operation.

The minister was also elucidated about the financial side of the project.

Dr. Khalaf claimed necessary aid for the university to recruit and train the staff that they be prepared to undertake the process of teaching students while offering medical services to the local community.

She was quoted by Petra as saying that there can be no question about equipping the hospital so that it can efficiently provide integrated services to the public.

Group to supply Kingdom with \$16m in aid

AMMAN (J.T.) — The World Food Programme (WFP) has stated that it will supply Jordan with \$16 million in equipment and food to farmers over a five-year period, Minister of Agriculture Mustafa Sheikhat said Saturday.

This period, he said, will cover the years of 1997 to 2001.

The organisation has provided assistance to the Kingdom since 1964 designed for highland development and increasing food production.

According to the minister, the WFP affirmed its decision during a board meeting in Rome last week.

The grant will help Jordan develop and reclaim highlands, reduce soil erosion, plant fruit trees, create pasture and range lands and contribute to programmes highlighting ways of augmenting rural women's income, he said.

Dr. Sheikhat met earlier this month with Australian and European Union ambassadors both of whose countries include WFP board members. He urged them to back the Kingdom's request for more aid to develop agriculture.

The minister also confirmed to the Jordan News Agency, Petra that a team of agricultural ministry specialists will hold meetings with a WFP team to work out the new highlands development plan for the next five years as well as a mechanism for implementing the plan and designating the area to be covered.

According to Dr. Sheikhat, the equipment and food will be portioned out to farmers whose lands are included in the project with the condition that they follow WFP instructions in all matters pertaining to land development.

He said that the government and the WFP are expected to formally sign the aid agreement in February of 1997.

Amman to host 28th annual Euro-Arab conference

AMMAN (Petra) — European and Arab parliamentarians will hold their 28th annual meeting in Amman in order to debate pressing issues relevant to their countries, Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Saad Hayel Srour announced Saturday.

This conference will be held from Nov. 29 until Dec. 1, Mr. Srour said who made the announcement following a meeting in his office with Secretary General of the Arab Parliamentary Union (APU) Noureddin Boushakouj with whom he reviewed necessary arrangements for the upcoming encounter.

He stated that Jordan warmly welcomes the parliamentarians and that the Kingdom is invested in promoting contacts between world parliamentarians in order to facilitate problem resolution.

Mr. Srour said that the agenda for the upcoming gathering includes four main topics: Euro-Arab cooperation in stimulating the peace process, solutions

to issues stemming from sanctions imposed on a number of Arab states combating terrorism and discussing economic association between European and Arab countries.

In addition, the two sides will examine reports regarding European and Arab relations and cooperation in fields outlined during the Euro-Arab dialogue meeting, held in Paris in 1994, Mr. Srour said.

The APU's last meeting was held in Damascus in May 1995 and passed a series of decisions pertaining to Arab parliamentary dialogue among world parliamentarians.

It was at the Damascus meeting that the Jordanian parliamentary delegation expressed its interest in hosting the Euro-Arab dialogue meeting in Amman.

Mr. Srour said that the Jordanian parliament is eager to promote dialogue with European, African and other nations as it is precisely this exchange of ideas which best reconciles differing views and helps to

better establish understanding among nations.

Also Saturday in a statement to the Jordan News Agency Petra, Mr. Srour said that Arab and Islamic countries ought to support Jordan's role in safeguarding Islamic holy sites in Arab Jerusalem.

As discussions between Palestinians and the Israelis over the future of the Arab city have been delayed, Jordan has a responsibility to maintain [this] role, the speaker said.

Indeed caring for the holy sites is a sacred duty and the Kingdom accepts no encroachment over this right, Mr. Srour said adding that Jordan harbours no ulterior motives in Palestinian bids.

He said that Jordan is not competing with anyone over the holy shrines but rather acting on behalf of Arab and Islamic nations in safeguarding these shrines and in filling the vacuum until the Palestinians assume guardianship for the Arab city.

Man stabbed to death in Amman

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Police are investigating the murder of a 24-year-old man found in a gas station on University Road Saturday, official sources said.

The source told the Jordan Times that the victim, Mohammad Khalil, employed by the Qandour Gas Station, was found by his colleagues with 12 stab wounds in different parts of his body.

Mohammad Jayousi, 36, an employee at the gas station where the victim worked and the first to discover the body, said that when he arrived at the gas station at 7:00 a.m., he found the victim lying in a pool of blood in a room on the premises.

"The door was broken and I found Mohammad

[Khalil] near it with blood covering his body," Mr. Jayousi said, adding that JD280 which the victim had the previous evening were missing.

According to Mr. Jayousi, a gas station safe contained JD20,000 but he estimated that the safe was out of the perpetrator's reach.

"I believe that theft was the motive behind the crime as the victim was a friendly and well-mannered person and had no enemies," he added.

According to Mr. Jayousi, Mr. Khalil was working at the gas station to support his family who lives in Jabal Akhdar in Zarqa.

A police official contacted by the Jordan Times Saturday evening said they were questioning suspects and investi-

gating the incident.

Two killed in road accident

Meanwhile two people were killed in two separate road accidents during the weekend, according to police reports.

In the Badia area, a 33-year-old man was run over near Muthalath Nugeirah.

Police said the driver of the vehicle, who was not identified in the report, was speeding and had failed to yield to the pedestrian.

In the second incident, an unidentified man was killed after he was hit by a bus on University Road.

Police said they are investigating the accident.

Accused testifies in case of murdered physician

AMMAN — A 24-year-old man accused of the attempted rape and murder of a physician in Tlaa Al Ali, testified last week that he did not intend to kill the woman but rather was taken by surprise.

"When I entered the flat, she caught me by surprise and began to scream, so I put my hands around her neck and she fell," Abdul Fatah Mustafa, who is accused of murdering Iman Yassin, 26, told the court.

He added that he "did not intend to kill her" but rather he was trying to stop her from screaming.

Mr. Mustafa, who worked as a guard and a

maintenance worker at the Fardous Housing Complex, faces five charges: murder, attempted rape, sexual aggression and house break.

According to the prosecution charge sheet, the defendant, who pleaded not guilty to all charges, broke into Ms. Yassin's apartment after midnight on Aug. 11, with the intention of raping her.

A struggle ensued and the woman's head struck the radiator.

However, last week a pathologist testified for the prosecution that the cause of death did not result from the blow rather the woman died of strangulation.

Criminal Court Prosecutor Ali Abu Hjeileh presented his closing argument in the case and asked the court to convict Mr. Mustafa on all five charges.

The court tribunal adjourned the case for Oct. 30, to hear the defence's closing argument in the case.

Meanwhile, the Criminal Court Saturday postponed procedures in the retrial of nine people, five of whom had been sentenced to death in 1995.

The case was postponed until Nov. 7, after one of the three defence attorneys failed to show up in court.

The Court was to hear an

expert report on hair samples found on some of the murdered victims whom five of the defendants are accused of murdering.

The decision came following a request by the Court of Cassation, which had studied the case and had asked the Criminal Court to revise its ruling.

The nine defendants were part of a group of 12, who received prison sentences last year, ranging from 10 years to execution for a total of 230 crimes, including murder, attempted murder, armed robbery, theft, kidnapping and fraud.

R.H.

WHAT'S GOING ON

CONCERT

*Performance by the Austrian UNICORN Quintet at the Royal Cultural Centre, Round Theatre, at 8:00 p.m.

ITALIAN FILM WEEK

*Two films entitled "Una storia semplice" (A Simple Story) and "Per grazia ricevuta" (For Favours Received) at the Royal Cultural Centre respectively at 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

*Abstract (plastic) art by Sa'ad Haddadin at Orfali Art Gallery, Um Utheina, until Nov. 5.
*Bani Hamida Women's Weaving Project '96 fall exhibition "Race the Trend" at Citroen-Darani Showroom,

Shmeisani until Nov. 3.

*Egyptian products exhibition at the International Exhibition Centre, Marj Al Hamam, until Oct. 29.

*Exhibition of "Visual Forms" by Abdul Latif Al Smoodi at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens St., until Oct. 30.

*Exhibition of children's books at Haya Cultural Centre, until Oct. 29.

*Exhibition entitled "Jerusalem Domes, Doors and Windows" comprising photos by Julia Reinbolt and paintings by Riham Ghassib at the Gallery, the InterContinental Hotel, until Oct. 31.

*Works by Mohammad Nasrallah at Darat Al Fann, Jabal Weibdeh. Also displaying abstract (plastic) art by Nabil Shehadeh and works by contemporary Arab artists, until Nov. 13.

*Wadi Al Faynan Art Exhibition — works by several artists inspired by Wadi Faynan at Balka Art Gallery, until Oct. 31.

*Works by Ghada Dahdaleh at the French Cultural Centre, until Oct. 29.

مكتبة ابن رشد

Dole hits ethics, Clinton appeals to young voters

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton stormed through the south Friday, trying to steal Republican territory from his frustrated challenger Bob Dole, who denounced the media and angrily scolded voters to wake up to Mr. Clinton's alleged ethical lapses.

Sen. Dole and independent candidate Ross Perot have both blasted Mr. Clinton and the Democratic Party in recent days for taking questionable campaign contributions from foreign interests and a convicted drug dealer.

Mr. Clinton, stressing family values issues in the closing days of the presidential race and ignoring Sen. Dole's attacks, used an outdoor rally in Georgia, the home state of House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich, to unveil a plan to let 100,000 college students teach children to read.

Making a direct appeal to younger voters, Mr. Clinton said, "this is your election and we need you. You have most of your tomorrows front of you. You have your future out there ahead of you, and you have to decide that."

While in Atlanta, Mr. Clinton also spoke by telephone with hundreds of black ministers in 32 states, urging them to get the followers to the voting booth on Nov. 5.

In Texas, Sen. Dole unleashed a scathing attack on Mr. Clinton and the national news media.

Sen. Dole's speech was a litany of what he did wrong ethically, including the Clinton administration's, coupled with an angry condemnation of the "liberal media" and vows for failing to pay attention.

Sen. Dole also asked Reform Party candidate



Republican presidential candidate Senator Bob Dole and his wife Elizabeth lead the cheers at a rally in Phoenix Friday. Sen. Dole unleashed a scathing attack on President Bill Clinton and the national news media (Reuters photo)

Ross Perot to endorse his candidacy if he did not want Mr. Clinton to be reelected — his first public comments since his campaign's unsuccessful bid this week to persuade Mr. Perot to quit the race.

In a stinging speech, an agitated Dole slammed Mr. Clinton for refusing to say he would not pardon individuals connected to White-water, saying the president was "sending a signal" to defendants to sit tight until after the election.

He also tried to tie the president to the controversy

over improper White House gathering of Republican FBI files.

"Where is the outrage in America? Where is the outrage in America? Where has the media gone in America?" Sen. Dole thundered at a rally in Houston.

"We have the president of the United States sitting down there with 900 FBI files, one might be one of yours ... and then we have the president of the United States who won't say he won't pardon somebody who did business with him and might implicate him

later on. Where is the outrage in America?"

White House spokesman Mike McCurry, travelling with Mr. Clinton in Georgia, responded, "Bob Dole went negative on Bill Clinton and that didn't work. Now Bob Dole has gone negative on America, and that's not going to work either."

A series of national polls released Friday showed Mr. Clinton solidifying his lead over Sen. Dole as the election drew nearer.

The Reuters daily tracking poll showed Sen. Dole lost ground Thursday following the disclosure that his campaign manager made an abortive appeal to Mr. Perot to drop out of the campaign.

With election day 11 days away, Mr. Clinton led Sen. Dole by 11 percentage points, up from 8.7 points the day before. An ABC poll put Mr. Clinton's lead at 12 points and noted Mr. Perot's support had inched up to 8 per cent. A Cnn/USA Today/Gallup poll showed Mr. Clinton leading Sen. Dole by 17 points and gave Mr. Perot 8 per cent.

A poll of 46,509 college students conducted on Oct. 23 by Follett College stores at its 500 U.S. college bookstores showed Mr. Clinton leading with 61.3 per cent of the vote, compared to just 27.1 per cent for Sen. Dole, and 7.1 per cent for Mr. Perot.

Meanwhile Sen. Dole's campaign disclosed figures suggesting it would be heavily outspent by Mr. Clinton between now and the election on Nov. 5. According to the latest monthly reports filed with the Federal Election Commission, the Clinton campaign had \$25.1 million left to spend as of Oct. 16, while the Dole campaign had \$13.3 million.



U.S. President Bill Clinton (right) and Senator Sam Nunn walk past an honour police cordon as they arrive to attend a campaign rally at Woodruff Park in Atlanta Friday. Mr. Clinton stormed into Georgia, the home state of Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich, with a plan to let 100,000 college students teach children to read (Reuters photo)

Chechen rebels want all Russian troops to leave

MOSCOW (R) — Chechen separatist leaders said Saturday they would not agree to any Russian military presence in Chechnya. Interfax News Agency said, heralding further complications in the search for peace in the region.

Interfax quoted chief rebel spokesman Movladi Udogov as saying that the separatist leadership opposed Moscow's plans to keep two brigades permanently in Chechnya.

"This issue has been raised by forces interested in continuing war in Chechnya," Mr. Udogov said, adding that the Aug. 31 peace deal the rebels signed with then top Russian negotiator Alexander Lebed contained no such provision.

Gen. Lebed has since been sacked by President

Boris Yeltsin.

Russia sent troops into Chechnya in December 1994 to quell the region's independence bid, and the subsequent war has cost tens of thousands of lives.

Under the Lebed deal Moscow agreed to withdraw its troops in exchange for the five-year postponement of a decision on Chechnya's future political status — the central issue of the conflict.

The rebels, who saw the peace deal as a face-saving way for Moscow to let Chechnya go, insist that all Russian troops should leave.

Russia, which has ruled out Chechen independence, is currently running down its forces in the region, but insisted recently that two brigades must remain per-

manently stationed there.

Discord over the Russian military presence seems likely to strike a further blow at peace talks between Moscow and rebels.

Separatist leaders have voiced concern that Mr. Yeltsin's decision earlier this month to sack Gen. Lebed, the author of the deal, could reinforce the "party of war" in Moscow and undermine the peace process in Chechnya.

Moscow's new negotiator, Ivan Rybkin, has said Moscow would stick to the peace deal but he has acknowledged differences in understanding key parts of the accord.

Mr. Rybkin was expected to visit Chechnya in the next few days to hold talks with rebel leaders.

Man held in kids-and-corpses murder case

SACRAMENTO, California (R) — A California high school teacher suspected of murdering his wife and leaving his children alone with her body for 10 days was arrested Friday in Mexico, police said. Mexican authorities arrested Robert Castorena, 38, without incident at an apartment in San Miguel De Allende, about 400 kilometres northwest of Mexico City, Sacramento Police said. The police said they were able to trace Mr. Castorena because he had been using his credit and bank cash cards. Mr. Castorena's wife, Janice, was found dead in their Sacramento home on Oct. 13, but police believe she was killed about 12 days earlier. She had a stab wound in her chest and a knife lay nearby, they said. Mr. Castorena spent a couple of days around the house before leaving, police said. They said the couple's two children had been left alone in the house with the body for about 10 days. The children, a 14-year-old girl and an 8-year-old boy, told police their father had threatened them at knife-point and they were too afraid to seek help. The murder came to light when the boy was caught shoplifting, something he apparently did to draw attention to his plight. Mr. Castorena, 38, was arrested on what would have been his wife's 39th birthday.

Australia's highest peak is a spelling mistake

SYDNEY (R) — Australia's highest mountain, already a schoolchild's nightmare to spell, could soon have its name changed to correct a careless historical mistake. The 2,228-metre peak was named after 18th century Polish national hero Tadeusz Kosciuszko by an admiring "companion" who explored the Snowy Mountains range in 1840. But Australia's early surveyors messed up the transcription and what should have been Mount Kosciuszko went down on maps and in textbooks as Mount Kosciusko. Now, prodded by Polish officials, the New South Wales geographical names board has been asked to decide whether the peak should have its missing Z returned. "There's no doubt the spelling is wrong," board Chairman Don Grant told Reuters. The mountain was named by 19th century Polish explorer Paul Strzelecki, who decided to honour his national hero Kosciuszko. Born in 1746, Kosciuszko fled to North America after an unsuccessful love affair in 1774 and became a hero fighting the British in the American War of Independence. He returned to Poland in the 1790s and united the country in the battle against Prussian and Russian domination. Mr. Grant said he heard of the spelling mistake on a recent visit to Warsaw and had the spelling confirmed to him by Poland's surveyor-general. "My own personal view as chairman of the Geographic Names Board is that you should not change history unless you're certain that you're right," Mr. Grant said.

Singapore to host conference on thinking

SINGAPORE (R) — Singapore will host an international conference on thinking in June 1997, a spokeswoman for the National Institute of Education (NIE) said. The conference, to be attended by more than 2,000 academics and business leaders, will discuss how different thinking processes work and how they can be taught. NIE senior fellow Norah Maier told Reuters. The pioneer of the idea of lateral thinking, Edward De Bono, would be among the more than 150 speakers at the gathering, Ms. Maier said.

Crisis-ridden Bulgaria awaits presidential poll

SOFIA (R) — Bulgaria — bottom of the ex-Warsaw Pact economic heap — is preparing for presidential elections Sunday which will be a crucial mid-term test for the ex-Communist government.

Beset by rising prices and faced with the prospect of food and fuel shortages this winter, the country's 6.75 million voters look set to rebuff the ruling Socialist Party.

The president's duties are largely ceremonial but the vote will provide a snapshot of the electoral mood and may prove decisive for the government of Prime Minister Zhan Videnov.

Preliminary results are expected early Monday morning.

Mr. Videnov appeared on state television Friday night to defend his government's record and urge voters to support the socialist candidate, Culture Minister Ivan Marazov.

"The opposition parties will bring nothing but chaos and destabilisation which will be fatal for economic reform and everybody's life," he said.

His show opposition candidate Petar Stoyanov ahead of Mr. Marazov but short of a first round majority. The 44-year-old lawyer has said a big opposition win would represent a vote of no confidence in the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) and has raised the possibility of early elections.

An opinion poll released by the laboratory for political behaviour, Thursday showed 32.5 per cent support for Mr. Stoyanov, 21.5 per cent for Mr. Marazov, with maverick politician George Ganchev, who styles himself as the mould-breaking alternative to the two main parties, close behind on 18.5 per cent.

Another 16 per cent of the 1,570 people polled were undecided.

This country of 8.4 million people is in the grip of

a severe economic crisis and a poverty spiral which has robbed many Bulgarians of their faith in the political system. Many say they will simply not vote.

While most of its former allies in the old Warsaw pact have seen some benefits of economic reform and are pressing for inclusion in NATO and the EU, Bulgaria remains mired in the legacy of its Communist past.

"We have a hard winter coming, everyone is worrying about their savings, the price of medicines, bread, and their jobs and everyone is asking why," Mr. Videnov said.

He claimed Bulgaria had been ruled incompetently since the fall of Communism in 1989 and that only his BSP, elected at the end of 1994, had implemented any practical reforms.

Outgoing President Zhelev, who led Bulgaria's transition to multiparty rule, lost a U.S.-style primary to Mr. Stoyanov in June and is not seeking re-election.

The Socialists draw much of their support from Bulgaria's two million pensioners, many of them nostalgic for the greater security offered under former Communist Leader Todor Zhivkov, when the state ensured cheap bread while blocking freedom of speech and movement.

The small Balkan state has the lowest level of foreign investment of any country in the region and a quarter of its numerous and insolvent banks are in receivership.

The Central Bank is rapidly running out of money to prop up the lev and buy fuel and also wheat — to replace Bulgarian production which has been exported because the world price is higher than the local price.

Whitewater prosecutor to probe Nussbaum testimony

WASHINGTON (R) — The Whitewater special prosecutor Friday won the power to investigate whether a former White House lawyer lied to Congress about Hillary Rodham Clinton's role in hiring a key figure in the FBI files controversy.

Kenneth Starr, the Whitewater independent counsel, received authorisation from a U.S. Court of Appeals to expand his already far-reaching investigation to cover whether former White House counsel Bernard Nussbaum committed perjury.

At issue was Mr. Nussbaum's testimony under oath on June 26 before a hearing of the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight concerning the White House's collection of hundreds of confidential FBI files.

Mr. Nussbaum denied knowing who had hired Craig Livingstone, the former White House personnel security chief at the centre of the controversy over the White House's obtaining the files on prominent Republicans and others.

Mr. Nussbaum in his testimony specifically denied discussing Livingstone with the first lady.

But FBI agent Dennis Sculimbrene, in a report of an interview with Mr. Nussbaum in 1993 during a background investigation of Mr. Livingstone, said Mrs. Clinton had "highly" recommended Mr. Livingstone to Mr. Nussbaum.

The FBI agent also said Mrs. Clinton had known Mr. Livingstone's mother.

Lawrence Pedowitz, a lawyer for Mr. Nussbaum, said Mr. Nussbaum weeks ago denied to Mr. Starr's staff making the remarks to Mr. Sculimbrene. The report was not dated or signed, no notes supporting it have been found and Mr. Sculimbrene does not remember the conversation, Mr. Pedowitz said.

"Mr. Nussbaum stands by his house testimony," he said in a statement issued in New York.

The first lady has said she had nothing to do with Mr. Livingstone's hiring.

Several committee members, including the Republican Chairman William Clinger, charged that Mr. Nussbaum may have made false statements and requested the criminal investigation.

Attorney General Janet Reno reviewed the allegations and determined that more investigation was warranted.

In asking that the Appeals Court broaden Mr. Starr's probe, Ms. Reno said, "I have concluded that further investigation is warranted to determine whether Mr. Nussbaum's statements before the committee are in fact false."

She said an investigation by the Justice Department into whether Mr. Nussbaum committed perjury would constitute "a political conflict of interest" and said Mr. Starr, who already is examining the FBI files controversy, should handle the case.

Mr. Starr was appointed in 1994 to investigate the Whitewater land deal in Arkansas involving Bill and Hillary Clinton in the 1980s, and the failure of a Little Rock Savings and Loan owned by their partners in the land deal.

He earlier this year won approval to investigate the firing of the White House Travel Office staff in May 1993, a probe that involves former presidential aide David Watkins and the first lady's role in that affair.

In June, Mr. Starr was authorised to investigate whether criminal laws had been broken when Mr. Livingstone and his aide, Anthony Marceca, collected approximately 900 FBI background files in late 1993 and early 1994.

Sacked S. Korean minister arrested in arms scandal

SEOUL (R) — South Korea arrested sacked Defence Minister Lee Yang-ho, an executive of a leading local company and two employees of an arms dealer Saturday in connection with an arms scandal, prosecutors said.

"Mr. Lee has been arrested and is taken to a Seoul prison," a prosecution official told Reuters. The others were also held.

Witnesses said two investigators led Mr. Lee, dressed in a dark suit, to a black limousine which whisked him off to the prison.

State prosecutors charged Mr. Lee, who was removed from President Kim Young-Sam's cabinet last week, with bribery and leaking official secrets to the arms dealer, Kwon Pyong-Ho, over a government purchase of military helicopters.

Senior prosecutor Ahn Kang-Min told reporters that Mr. Lee admitted near the end of a three-day probe into the scandal that he accepted a 150 million (\$181,000) bribe last year from Daewoo Heavy Industries Ltd through Kwon.

"The prosecution is still tracing (Lee's) bank accounts," Mr. Ahn said, suggesting that an investigation into whether there were other kickbacks made to Mr. Lee was continuing.

"Mr. Lee initially denied bribery charges but he made a number of contradictory remarks," a prosecution spokesman said.

Mr. Lee later admitted taking the money after investigators told him that prosecutors had secured evidence he had faced extortion threats by Mr. Kwon's employees over the arms deal.

Among those arrested Saturday were Lee Nam-Hee and Kang Jong-Ho, employees of a company owned by the arms dealer. They were charged with extorting 50 million won from former Mr. Lee by threatening to expose kickbacks. The payment was



South Korea's former defence minister Lee Yang-ho (right) is escorted to a Seoul prison after a criminal court issued an arrest warrant Saturday (Reuters photo)

made by a Daewoo executive under pressure from Mr. Lee, the spokesman said.

He said that Mr. Lee and the arms dealer split a 300 million won bribe from Daewoo heavy to arrange the government purchase.

Mr. Lee has not commented publicly on the charges, but state media earlier quoted him as denying any wrongdoing.

Daewoo said it gave money to the arms dealer but insisted it was a commission, not a bribe.

Also arrested Saturday was Sok Chin-Chol, who was the president of Daewoo Heavy, a unit of Daewoo Group, last year.

Mr. Sok now heads the group's car subsidiary in Poland.

Daewoo Group, whose founder Kim Woo-Choon is appealing a two-year jail sentence imposed for bribing former President Roh Tae-Woo, is one of South Korea's three largest conglomerates.

The arms dealer, Mr. Kwon, was believed to be in Beijing but could not be

reached for comment.

The affair has embarrassed the president, who has staked his reputation on an anti-corruption drive that has led to the trial and conviction of ex-Presidents Roh and Chun Doo Hwan.

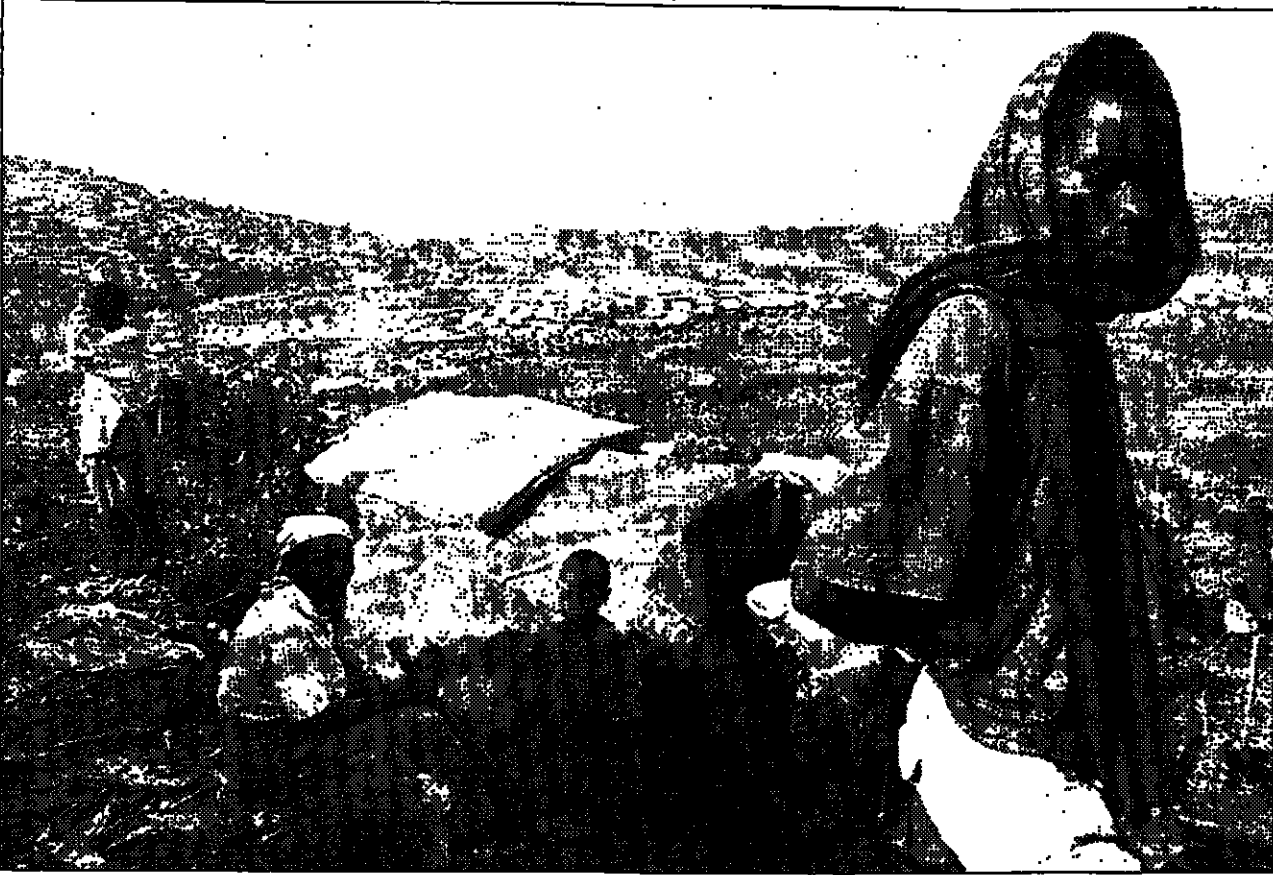
Mr. Chun was sentenced to death and Mr. Roh to 22-1/2 years in jail after being found guilty in August of corruption, mutiny and treason. Both are appealing.

President Kim described the arms scandal as "an act of betrayal to the people" and called for stern legal steps against Mr. Lee, presidential spokesman Yoon Yoo-Joon said.

The president removed Mr. Lee from his post on Oct. 17 as part of a reshuffle of the military's top brass. The reshuffle followed harsh criticism of the military for failing to prevent an incursion by a North Korean submarine last month.

Hours after Mr. Lee's dismissal, the main opposition National Congress for New Politics accused Mr. Lee of taking the bribes, prompting the president to order a full investigation.

ملكا من لائل



Rwandan refugees set up camp after fleeing earlier in the week from fighting between ethnic Tutsi rebels and the Zairean army. Some 200,000 Rwandan and Burundian refugees are thought to be on the road and settling in already established camps (Reuters photo)

Sri Lanka suicide attack kills 14 as Tiger violence escalates

COLOMBO (AFP) — Tamil Tiger guerrillas destroyed a navy gunboat in Sri Lanka Saturday in a suicide attack, killing 12 sailors and two rebels to raise the death toll in six days of violence to 68, officials said.

The gunboat was patrolling just outside the strategic port of Trincomalee in the island's north-east when the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) carried out the pre-dawn suicide attack, officials said.

"The Tigers used suicide cadres to ram a boat packed with explosives against the gun boat P-457," a local official said.

"There would have been at least two terrorists on board the suicide craft."

The navy gunboat had two officers and 10 sailors on board, and the defence ministry here said it sank after the rebel attack. There were at least 10 other rebel boats in the area, the ministry said.

Officials were investigating whether the rebels were on their way to attack the port of Trincomalee, a key government base for action against the Tigers, when they were intercepted by the navy.

"They are making a tremendous attempt to infiltrate the harbour to cause more damage," a local official said.

The latest round of fighting known as "Eelam War III" started in Trincomalee when the LTTE called off six months of talks with the government and sank two gun boats berthed inside the port in April last year.

The guerrillas who are leading a protracted campaign for a homeland called Eelam in the island's northern and eastern regions have staged similar attacks against the navy in the region since then.

The latest loss suffered by the navy compounded problems for security forces in the island's eastern province after troops secured the northern stronghold of the Tigers late last month.

The Tigers smashed an eastern police post four days ago and escaped after killing 18 constables and two civilians, officials said.

The assault came a day after eight soldiers were killed in an attack on an army outpost in the eastern district of Batticaloa.

Last week, nine soldiers and 17 guerrillas were killed when the military hit a coastal base of the LTTE. The navy lost two patrol craft and an air force helicopter was damaged by rebel fire in that offensive.

The LTTE said that despite the commando-style raid the security forces failed to dismantle their radar station on the north-eastern coast.

The Tigers are believed to be using the facility to track military boat movements between Trincomalee and the northern peninsula of Jaffna.

Since the rebels lost Jaffna to security forces after a series of operations begun in October last year they have been staging hit-and-run attacks.

Security forces have said they were bracing for a protracted jungle war with the Tamil Tigers whose separatist campaign has claimed more than 50,000 lives since 1972.

Maltese vote on their date with Europe

VALLETTA (R) — The people of Malta voted Saturday for a new parliament in an election seen as a referendum on whether the Mediterranean island should pursue its bid to join the European Union.

Two main parties are vying for the votes of the 275,000 electorate, with the ruling Nationalist Party promising to give priority to getting Malta into the EU while the Labour Party says it will drop the island's application.

Polling stations, set to open at 7 a.m., opened their doors a little later, apparently because of last-minute hitches with ballot boxes.

Malta applied for membership in 1990 under Prime Minister Edward Fenech Adami, 62, who told Reuters Friday: "I already have a mandate... (but) it will be a sort of another referendum on Malta's membership of the EU."

Mr. Fenech Adami's Nationalist Party, which had a three-seat majority in the outgoing 65-seat parliament, says that membership will ensure economic prosperity. The previous general elections were held in 1992.

Malta's bid is opposed by Labour Party leader Alfred Sant, who says membership would cost the small island too much.

Instead, he promises to seek a "special relationship" with Europe and "positive neutrality" for Malta.

Mr. Sant, 48, vows to dismantle value added tax, a basic feature of EU membership, and in consequence withdraw Malta's application.

He says VAT has brought hardship to the people and can be replaced with customs tariffs.

"We should have a special relationship, not membership... I would like to see security, not military, cooperation, for example on drugs, contraband and the movement of people."

At mass meetings throughout the Mediterranean island, the leaders and some 300 candidates for the 65-seat parliament have focused on peoples' pockets and, by extension, Europe.

The prime minister's party says its management of the economy, based mainly on manufacturing and tourism, has seen growth at some six per cent a year and brought unemployment down to 3.2 per cent.

It adds that EU membership could mean assistance of £43 million (\$118 million) a year and give "reassuring awareness that we have the security of a group of European countries."

Tutsi rebels reportedly seize 2 east Zaire towns

BUKAVU, Zaire (R) — Tutsi rebels were reported Saturday to have seized two towns in eastern Zaire and aid workers said up to 200,000 Rwandan refugees were on the move.

Burundian military sources and Burundi state radio said the town of Uvira at the northern end of Lake Tanganyika had fallen to the rebels after two days of battles with Zairean forces.

Aid workers in Goma, eastern Zaire, and in Geneva said Tutsi fighters had also captured the town of Rutshuru 10 kilometres from Goma city, the capital of North Kivu province.

The complex multi-sided conflict convulsing much of eastern Zaire appeared to be spreading through the 1.1 million Rwandan refugees based in the area.

For the first time, large numbers of Rwandan refugees were reported to be on the move in the Goma region north of here.

"Some 200,000 refugees from Kibumba Camp near Goma are heading down the road towards the city," said a Nairobi-based U.N. official, who declined to be identified.

He said aid workers described the town of Rutshuru as a war zone and added it appeared the attackers were former Tutsi residents of the Masisi region near Goma.

Nearly 300,000 Rwandan and Burundian refugees were uprooted from camps in south Kivu province by fighting in the past week.

An aid official in Goma said by telephone the exodus of refugees had been triggered by shooting in the Kibumba camp.

"There is shooting in Kibumba Camp. This morning 30 people who were injured were brought to our hospital in Kibumba," said Elodie Martel, head of the Goma delegation of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

"A large number of refugees are apparently walking towards Goma. The shooting started Friday and is in the surrounding area and in the camp itself," said Mr. Martel, adding she could not confirm all 200,000 residents from Kibumba had fled the camp.

She said the attackers appeared to be the same group as Tutsi rebels who advanced against Zairean troops in south Kivu.

Other aid officials said large explosions, apparently mortar bombs, were heard in or around Kibumba Friday and Saturday.

It was the first refugee movement from Rwandan camps since Goma.

In Bukavu, 100 km north of Uvira, four mortar blasts were heard Saturday morning and the United Nations ordered an evacuation of aid workers from the city because of increasing insecurity, a U.N. spokeswoman said.

"There are orders from U.N. security office in New York to carry out a total partial evacuation of staff from Bukavu to Entebbe Airport in Uganda today," said Brenda Barton, spokeswoman for the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) in Nairobi.

Tutsi Banyamulenge rebels say they are fighting Zairean troops after a Zairean order to expel them from the country.

The Banyamulenge arrived in the region up to 200 years ago but ethnic tensions have become acute in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide and civil war in neighbouring Rwanda.

About 1.1 million Hutus fled to Zaire from Rwanda in fear of reprisals for the killing by Hutus of up to one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko has been absent from the country for more than two months, receiving cancer treatment in Switzerland, and his long illness is fuelling the crisis.

Zairean troops have been pulling back towards Bukavu, capital of south Kivu province, in recent days as the rebels advance from the south.

Saturday was the first time mortar explosions were clearly heard in Bukavu since fighting in eastern Zaire broke out.

The blasts came from the area near Panzi Camp, 10 km south of the city centre, but it was unclear whether the fire was incoming or outgoing.

Panzi Camp houses 2,000 Tutsi former soldiers of the Zairean army and 5,000 family members who fled to Zaire in 1994.

Millitarians armed only with pieces of wood backed the roads in the south of the city and civilian stoned journalists.

Burma's media is tightly controlled by the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) and considered to be the mouthpiece of the government.

Calling Ms. Suu Kyi "Mrs Michael Aris" in reference to her marriage to the British academic, the commentary said Mr. Aris — who lives in England and is rarely allowed to visit Ms. Suu Kyi — and the CIA were pulling the strings and Ms. Suu Kyi was acting as their puppet to help cause unrest in the nation.

"(The CIA) are pulling strings from behind, just to have her disparaging, vilifying and obstructing everything being done by (the) government and instigating the unwitting youths in

devious ways to create disturbances," the commentary said.

The SLORC has accused Ms. Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party of colluding with students involved in rare sit-in protests in Rangoon last week. It has also accused her of conspiring with western governments, especially the United States, to try and upset the nation's peace.

The government detained Suu Kyi's close aide Kyi Maung for questioning about his role in the protests.

Up to 1,000 university students staged a sit-in protest early Wednesday at an intersection about two kilometres from Ms. Suu Kyi's residence.

Ms. Suu Kyi, who lived under house arrest for six years and was released in July 1995, was urged by security officials from the government and the NLD not to leave her house during the protests.

Diplomats quoted an NLD official as saying Ms. Suu Kyi had been put under virtual house arrest but a government official told Reuters Friday Ms. Suu Kyi was under restrictions.

But there was still no word from her Saturday, as the roads leading to her house remained blocked. Her telephone has not worked since late September, when the line was apparently cut by the SLORC took various steps to prevent the NLD from holding a party meeting.

Rangoon (R) — Burma's state-run media continued its attacks on democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi Saturday, saying she was being manipulated by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to try and bring down the government.

It is not that the CIA is having her play a ploy to be able to get political power as a democracy leader," a commentary in the official New Light of Myanmar said.

"The aim of putting her onto the political stage is just to have her plotting to bring down the government that is striving day and night and making progress all round while maintaining stability, peace and tranquility in the country."

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Polls have consistently placed Mr. Chan, Hong Kong's top civil servant and deputy to British governor Chris Patten, as the people's top choice to lead the territory after it reverts to Chinese rule at midnight on June 30, 1997.

Popularity counts for little, however, because the territory's first post-colonial leader will be selected in December by a 400-strong selection board which in turn will be chosen by a China-appointed preparatory committee.

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Billionaire shipping magnate Tung Chee-hwa, who declared his intention to run and resigned as chairman from his family's shipping empire on Oct. 18, became the first person to officially

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Turn after Nov. 5?

WITH LESS than two weeks left for the U.S. presidential elections, President Bill Clinton appears headed towards a convincing victory over his rival, Republican Bob Dole. After two national television debates and a vigorous campaign, the president remains way ahead of Senator Dole, even though the Republicans believe that the gap in popularity is not so big to be narrowed ever further towards the finish line. But this sense of optimism on the part of the Dole camp seems to be more hope than reality especially since the U.S. economy is more robust than before and unemployment is reaching an all-time low. The Republican Party has traditionally prided itself as offering panacea to the country's economic woes, and since they are not so much so for doing this now, the Republican candidate is left with little or no economic cards to play with.

On the foreign affairs level, President Clinton enjoys quite a bit of immunity from criticism since there are no major international, regional or even bilateral political issues on which he may be attacked. Likewise, on the internal front, there are really no new factors that stand to jeopardise his reelection chances for another four-year term. The social ills in the country in addition to the chronic law and order controversies have become national legacies for which both the Republicans and the Democrats could be held responsible. When all fails, Senator Dole, of course, could and did get personal as he hit hard recently on the president and his administration over issues of ethics and character.

But judging by results of the most recent polls this "character assassination campaign" does not appear to have worked much as it has failed till this late hour to sway potential voters away from the president.

Barring unforeseen events, Mr. Clinton's reelection seems almost assured. This projection would put the Americans as well as the rest of the world beyond the Nov. 5 date when the fate of the race will be sealed and the real work begins.

On top of re-elected Clinton's agenda will be the peace process in the Middle East. The president will most probably face the question of whether he needs to put more pressure on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in order to get the process back on track and move it forward. President Clinton has invested heavily in the peace effort so far and he can ill-afford to see his time and energy wasted. It will have been one thing for him to tolerate low key tactics vis-a-vis Israel during an election year and quite another to accept obstinacy and procrastination after Nov. 5.

Two weeks are not a long time to wait in anticipation of a new turn of events.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

ISRAEL'S SHAMEFUL treatment of the French president during his visit to Jerusalem can by no means dissuade France from pursuing its current drive to achieve peace and stability in the Middle East, said Ahmad Misch, a writer for Al Ra'i. Through its behaviour and the siege it imposed on Mr. Chirac, preventing him from making contacts with the Arab people of Jerusalem, Israel has sent a message to the world that it does not only disregard the Arab and Palestinian people's rights but it is also determined to thwart the world community's bid to help the region restore peace and security, said the writer. Israel has indeed underlined this message by adamantly sticking to its policy in the ongoing negotiations with the Palestinians which achieved nothing following weeks of futile meetings under the sponsorship of the United States, according to the writer. The siege which Israel has clamped on Mr. Chirac during his walk in the streets of the Old City of Jerusalem is a miniature of the siege it has been imposing on the Palestinians to stifle their struggle and their resistance to occupation, he added. He said that Mr. Netanyahu seems to be determined to tell the world that Israel will not be committed to the implementation of any agreements with the Arabs and is determined to rule out chances of peace.

FRENCH PRESIDENT Jacques Chirac's visit to the Middle East assumed great importance as its reasserted France's status in Europe and its role in world affairs, according to a writer for Al Ra'i. Tawfiq Abul Rub said that the visit gave the president a chance to tell the world that Europe is opposed to Israel's aggression and continued occupation of Arab lands. While in Israel, Mr. Chirac said that Israel forces must withdraw from the occupied Palestinian lands and pave the way for the creation of a Palestinian state; and while in Syria, he demanded that Israel return the Golan Heights to Syria and the southern Lebanese territories to their legitimate owners, noted the writer. He said the most emphatic statement was about Jerusalem which, the president stressed, must remain open to the various religions, with its Arab part returned to the Arab owners. Mr. Chirac, who has inherited the principles of Charles de Gaulle, proved to be faithful to the great principles and ideas of a great country like France and manifested his country's credibility and determination to serve the cause of justice and peace, added the writer. Indeed, he said, Mr. Chirac's tour served as one of the most prominent events in the region's modern history.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Iraqi market sacrificed for nothing

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

JORDAN'S NATIONAL exports to the Iraqi market rose in 1995 by 80 per cent, to reach JD 190.8 million (\$272 million) excluding reexport. Jordanian exports to Iraq in 1996 were supposed to top JD 200 million (\$285 million) or 20 per cent of all commodity exports.

What is actually happening is that the value of Jordanian exports to Iraq during the first seven months of 1996 did not exceed JD 50.5 million (\$72 million). If this trend continues, the whole year's exports to Iraq will be in the order of JD 86.6 million (\$123 million) or less than half of what it should be, a loss to Jordan of JD 113.4 million (\$162 million). The decrease in exports came about due to measures taken by the Jordanian government.

It is worth mentioning that Jordan's overall national exports during the first seven months of 1996 reflected a growth rate of only 9.7 per cent, compared to 25 per cent in 1995. Had it not been for the reduction in our exports to Iraq, the growth rate of exports this year would have been in the order of 22 per cent. The reduction of Jordanian exports to Iraq reduced overall exports by 12.3 per cent.

Assuming that the value added to Jordan's national exports is 40 per cent on average, the reduction of exports to Iraq must have reduced the growth of the economy, measured by gross domestic product (GDP), by one percentage point or one fifth of the expected growth rate. As a matter of fact, the forecast of growth in 1996 has already been revised, down to 5.2 per cent from the foreseen 6.5 per cent.

It is only fair to wonder about the return Jordan received for making this sacrifice. The obvious answer is: nothing. Kuwaiti markets remained closed in the face of Jordan. Israel continued to close its market under the pretext of security. It denied Jordan access to the Palestinian market which remained a captured market for Israeli products. Saudi Arabia managed to enter into a trade agreement with Jordan which allowed Saudi Arabia to export to Jordan 150 per cent of Jordan's exports to Saudi Arabia. The United States, which granted the Palestinian exports sweeping tax exemptions in the American market, did not extend the same favour to Jordan.

When the U.S. foreign aid budget was finally approved, the economic aid allocated to Jordan was peanuts, no more than \$10 million, another indication that America takes Jordan for granted, expects Jordan to observe its policies and bear the costs without any compensation. In other words, America does not respect the Jordanians.

We are told that Jordanian industrialists and producers should look for other markets, such as Europe and Far East. This is quite right, but penetrating a new market does not necessarily mean withdrawal from a traditional market in which we have the connections and the experience, built over 15 years; it is easy to withdraw from the Iraqi market or any market, but it is extremely difficult to reenter in the future. Others like Turkey and Iran will fill the vacuum

and replace us forever.

It is also being argued that due to its exceptional circumstances, Iraq used to buy Jordanian commodities with inferior specifications. The industries producing these inferior products are not worth survival. This may be true, but should we close our factories which produce the low standard commodities before it is necessary to do so? Is the Jordanian government in the business of protecting the Iraqi consumer from the Jordanian producers?

The irony is that we were patient for a long time, during which we allowed the Iraqi debt to our Central Bank to swell beyond our ability at the most difficult of times. Then suddenly we wake up, and cut our exports to Iraq when the Security Council passes the oil for food and medicine formula, which enables Iraq to import against hard cash and especially when the Iraqi minister of trade confirms, time and again, that Iraq will continue to give Jordan priority over other countries.

Jordan's loss in the commodity sector is not much more than its loss in the services sector. Aqaba port handling of Iraqi business dwindled to a bare minimum, and the transportation sector lost the lucrative business of Aqaba-Baghdad route.

Before making any far-reaching decision, the government has the duty to evaluate costs and benefits. In this case, the costs were evident, the benefits were elusive.

Secession — 'freedom, democracy and aspirations of the oppressed'

By Thomas H. Naylor and William H. Willimon

DURHAM, North Carolina

Few words invoke stronger negative feelings among Americans than "secession." But in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and Quebec, secession is associated with freedom, democracy and the aspirations of the oppressed — as was the case when the United States was founded in 1776.

With the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, secession fever has spread all over Europe. The former Soviet Union split into 15 independent republics, many of which have their own internal secessionist groups striving for independence as well. Czechoslovakia peacefully divided itself into the Czech and Slovak republics. As a result of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia are all independent nations as well. Throughout Europe there are dozens of other independence movements in Belgium, Bulgaria, Britain, Italy, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Spain. And in this hemisphere, the

Quebecois seem more determined than ever before to split with English-speaking Canada.

What if secession fever were spread across the Atlantic or over the Canadian border into the United States, where some say it originated in the first place? Would the U.S. government's reaction be any different from Moscow's heavy-handed response in Chechnya?

Brilliant though the drafters of the American Constitution may have been, they could not have envisioned the size and diversity of the United States today. The country is an unworkable megacorporation that defies central management and control. The time has come to begin planning the rational downsizing of America. States such as Alaska, Hawaii, Oregon and Vermont should be allowed to secede. Big cities like New York and Los Angeles should have the right to break up or become independent city-states.

Pushed to the limits, states' rights lead not to devolution but to secession. If a state truly wants to be independent of Washington, then it should be free to

leave the Union — an act clearly not prohibited by the constitution. Few political conservatives seem to realise that by weakening the control the federal government has over the states, forces will be set loose that not only encourage competition among states but will lead to renewed interest in secession.

In many ways, Vermont might be an ideal state to test the limits of how far the United States government would be prepared to go to preserve the Union. Vermont is tiny, non-threatening and lacks any resources of strategic importance to the rest of the United States.

There is not a single military base in Vermont. Some have suggested that Vermont should join forces with New Hampshire and Maine and possibly the Maritime provinces of Canada as well, making a nation with roughly the population of Denmark.

Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island also might form a small nation. If states were allowed to leave the Union, upstate New York City no doubt would split, because they have little or nothing in

common.

One could envision a Mid-Atlantic alliance consisting of southern Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina. Northern Virginia, the District of Columbia and Maryland might unite.

Miami and South Florida would probably become a Hispanic nation just as would parts of south Texas and Los Angeles County.

California most likely would split into at least three independent nations. Surely independent-minded Texas would go it alone.

Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio might become the Rust Belt Nation. Pennsylvania might be invited to join them, if it did not opt to travel alone.

The handful of predominantly African-American counties in northwest Mississippi known as the Mississippi Delta probably would become the first black nation in America. Parts of Alabama, Georgia and northern Florida might be candidates for the same. South Louisiana might be reconstituted as Acadia South.

Few ethnic groups in the United States would have a stronger claim for independence than Native

Americans. In principle,

there is no reason that there could not be several independent Indian nations. In practice, the existing Indian reservations are sparsely populated, poor, dependent on the government and dispersed throughout the United States. However, Indian nations might be sustainable in Arizona, California and Oklahoma, each of which has more than 200,000 Indians living mostly on reservations. There are fewer than 2 million Indians left in the United States.

Washington and Oregon might link up with British Columbia and possibly Alaska. However, both Alaska and Hawaii would encounter tough resistance from the Pentagon, if they try to secede, because of their strategic military importance. There could be a Rocky Mountain Nation and possibly a Great Plains Republic as well.

When one begins to speculate about alternative subdivisions of states and alliances among states, one realises that most of our states have far less in common than our politicians often pretend.

If Palestine could be divided into a Jewish state and an Arab state, why can't independent African-American, Hispanic and Native American states be carved out of the United States? The fighting between the Arabs and the Israelis would have ended years ago if we had cut off all U.S. military and financial aid to both sides.

Thanks largely to Abraham Lincoln, secession has been viewed a political pariah by most Americans since the civil war. But suppose the notion that, "just as a nation or a state has right to form, so too does it have a right to disband, subdivide itself or secede from a larger unit," were suddenly to become politically correct? What if secession fever were to become as virulent as Reaganism or Thatcherism? Then what would we do?

Thomas Naylor is professor emeritus of economics and William Willimon is dean of the chapel at Duke University. The above article is reprinted from The Sun (Baltimore).

What if the nations of Europe aren't prepared to melt away?

By William Pfaff

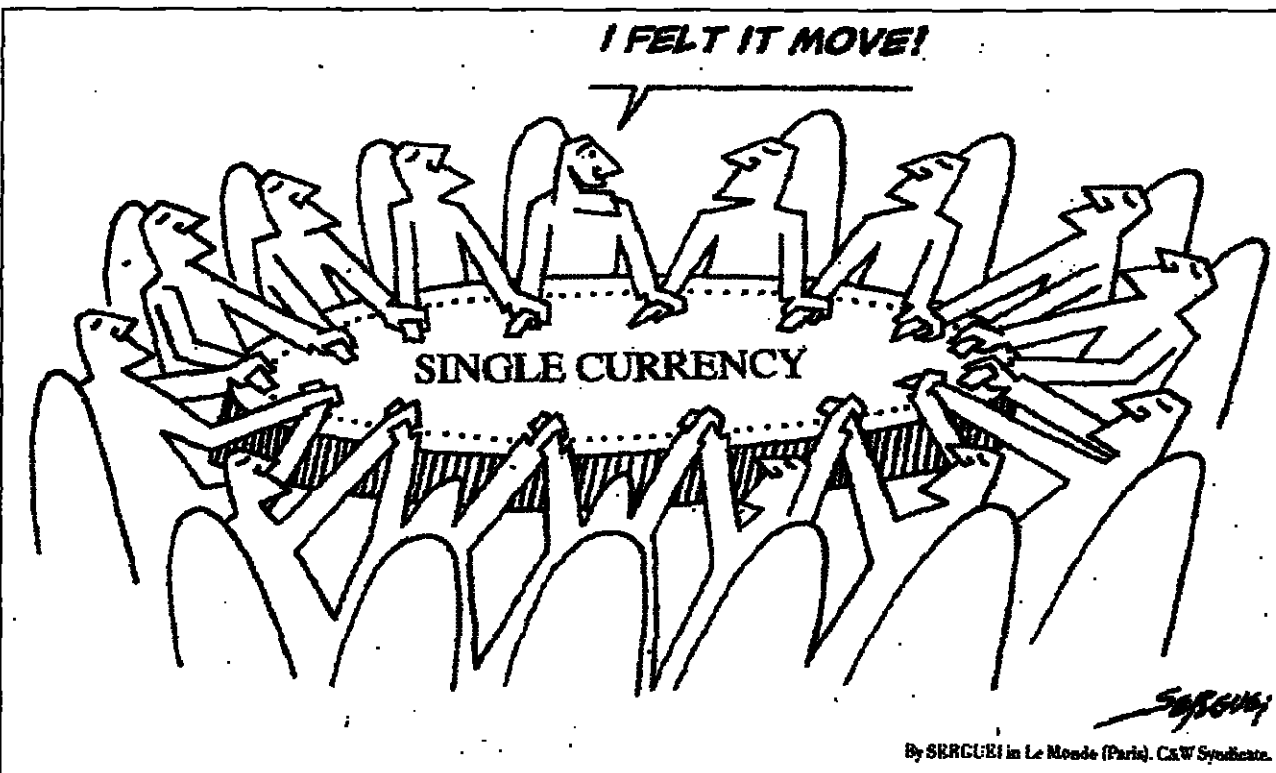
LONDON — What if the British are right about Europe? A majority of the British say they are in favour of "Europe" but hostile to what the newspapers call "a European superstate." By that they mean the kind of closely integrated Europe that the rest of Europe seems to be moving towards.

That Maastricht treaty promises not only a single currency — meaning a European central bank and very considerable fiscal and budget coordination, with major effect on national economic policies and priorities — but also a single European security and foreign policy.

Today it seems almost certain that a single currency will exist by 1999, replacing national currencies in Germany, France and a half-dozen smaller states. Its implications, demands and consequences remain unclear. There is in this an element of what the French call the fuite en avant — "We'll do it and afterward see what we've actually done." It is a method that works, but the dangers are obvious.

Popular support for European Union, meanwhile, is declining in a number of the member countries, notably Austria. Anti-European sentiment has grown in Germany and France, even though the two governments remain firmly committed to the Maastricht goals.

A pan-European poll published in Brussels has indicated that while 94 per cent of Europe's so-called decision-makers are firm-



By SERGIO in Le Monde (Paris). CAW Syndicate.

ly committed to the European Union, only 48 per cent of the public feels the same way. On the single currency, 85 per cent of decision makers are for it but only 54 per cent of the public, while 37 per cent of the public is hostile.

Even among the pro-European elites there has been a faltering of drive and purpose. The Intergovernmental Conference which is attempting to recapitulate and refine the Maastricht project seems to be drifting.

The great issues are endlessly debated in the press and at pan-European conferences and seminars, but the debates never get down to solutions of the fundamental conflicts.

Can the Union really be "deepened" — that is, made increasingly complex and centralised — at the same time that it tries to incorporate a big group of new members from Central and Eastern Europe? Can it really have a common foreign policy on anything other than the pieties everyone agrees on anyway?

After the Jerusalem tunnel crisis in September, the French government tried to convince the Union that Europe should be represented at the negotiations meant to restore the peace process. The best they could get was agreement for a quick trip to Israel by the Irish foreign minister representing the Union, where he was given the

cold shoulder by both Israelis and Americans. Yet the European Union puts up most of the money for the peace process.

Sovereignty is the key question in all of this. Do the sovereign European governments really intend to cede it? This is the issue that the British have recognised. They are reacting to the others' failure to make their intentions clear. The others do not do so because the issue is too sensitive, and because they do not really know what they want.

"Europe" exists today because the principal Continental West European survivors of the world wars resolved to yield their sovereign right to make war on one another

to accomplish this they put their war resources under a common authority. This was a political act which succeeded because it was founded on a moral resolution of great historical importance.

But this success was responsible for certain illusions about further surrenders of sovereignty in the cause of European integration.

A facile and mistaken analogy was drawn with the union of the American colonies in the 18th century. That was a union among people who had never considered themselves divided.

A federative ambition which neglects the national imperative, the rootedness, the sovereign feeling

of the European peoples, is doomed to crisis, and this is what Europe experiences today. The sovereignty issue has been pushed aside by those committed to federation, in the apparent hope that by ignoring it they can override it.

Surely there can be no Europe for the new millennium which affronts national identities. This is perhaps more evident to an outsider than to Europeans themselves, at ease with their overall cultural identity as members of European civilisation. But membership in a common civilisation does not override the force of national sovereignty and national identity.

Europe's challenge is to carry the reconciliation which began with creation of the Coal and Steel Community in 1951 on to something much more complex where there can be a distribution of individual national roles in conscious acknowledgement of a common European responsibility.

The "federal" model is inadequate. That is what European public opinion is saying.

There has to be a rearticulation of what Europe means, and of how sovereignty and national identity can be accommodated, or redefined. Until that is done, the European enterprise risks decline, rather than progress. In view of all that has been accomplished since 1951, it would be a great tragedy.

International Herald Tribune

Mass market for computers promises turmoil

By Neil Winton
Reuter

LONDON — Two airline pilots are peering complacently out of the cockpit on yet another uneventful flight through the clouds.

One pilot spots an animal and says calmly: "I didn't know mountain goats lived in clouds".

Frank Gens, senior vice-president of International Data Corp (IDC), uses this scenario in a speech to illustrate that unexpected disasters can suddenly loom up and destroy companies in the fast moving world of information technology.

And, according to Mr. Gens, there are shocks in store for anyone who feels that recent upheavals mean they can now relax and familiarise themselves with the new ways at their leisure.

Apparently, you ain't seen nothing yet.

"The Internet is triggering revolution, not evolution in the marketplace," Mr. Gens told a conference in Paris sponsored by IDC, the U.S. information technology consultancy and publisher.

And new technologies will be triggered by consumers in the coming mass market for devices that will pave the way to the information society.

"The business it market will be transformed by the massive scale of the consumer market," Mr. Gens said.

IDC says that so far computers have succeeded in two stages.

In the 1970s, company back-offices were automated, mainly with mainframe computers. The second phase, from the 80s until

now, saw the computerisation of front-offices, with point-of-sale equipment and mobile lap-top personal computers.

In the third phase, computing devices will enter every home leading to an explosion of high street buying. The information society will have arrived.

According to IDC, by 2000 there will be 160 million people surfing the Internet, the worldwide network of computers linked across telephone lines. In 1996 there are about 35 million Internet users, more than double the previous year's 16 million.

By the end of the century, computers will have ceased to be opaque, unreliable and expensive. Like the telephone, they will be turned off and on instinctively. Households will use enormous computing power

without realising it.

"I think it (the computer) is going to be a typical household appliance. All over the house things will be connected. It will make people's home lives much more efficient and easy," said computing guru Esther Dyson.

Ms. Dyson was speaking by telephone while on a trip to Prague.

"You will use e (electronic) mail to do business and for your personal life. You will find out what's on sale at Harrods, what's for lunch at the local restaurant. It doesn't seem revolutionary, it may seem trivial, but it adds up to what people control," said Ms. Dyson, who publishes the U.S.-based "Esther Dyson's monthly report".

This belief that the mass market is dawning has set up a desperate race among

the world's high technology companies.

They want to be the winners in the struggle to provide cheap and easy-to-use gadgets. Some see a chance to knock over current winners in the personal computer world, like Microsoft, the aggressive U.S.-based software giant.

Not all industry experts are convinced that ordinary consumers will be beating a path to the computer store.

"People who work with computers, they've taken them into their home lives. But those not exposed to the technology, even if they've got the money are not likely to want to get involved," said Graham Taylor, senior vice-president at High Technology Consultancy Inteco.

But people could find themselves surfing the Net without realising. Televisions will effectively

become personal computers by linking them to set-top boxes, or incorporating microprocessors into their design.

"For example, a mobile phone with a little processor inside would let you automatically dial up the cricket scores, share prices, your bank balance. Data would be coming from a Web site, but you wouldn't know this," said Mr. Taylor.

The struggle to find the fast lane to the information superhighway is widening to include television, telephone, as well as information technology companies.

Satellite television's BSKYB, 40 per cent owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corp, has said it will offer Internet connections when it starts a digital television service next year.

But currently the inside track is held by the so-called

network computer.

Proselytiser-in-chief for the network computer is serial Microsoft boss Larry Ellison, chairman and chief executive officer of database leader Oracle of the U.S.

Oracle's network computer is a stripped down version of the personal computer. Costing about \$500 compared with upwards of \$2,000 for a PC, the network computer dials up processing power every time it is used.

Mr. Ellison has said that the PC is ridiculously over-powered and over priced. Why pay for power and storage space you are not going to use, when you can dial up just the required brawn and brain power each use?

Oracle is only just beginning to sell these devices initially aimed at business

which are more likely to have the required high-quality telephone lines.

Microsoft has made wrong turns before and come storming back to mangle the competition.

"(Microsoft chairman) Mr. (Bill) Gates is not going to lie still and let the network computer happen. They will be major players in all this," said Inteco's Taylor.

But all these devices, however clever, and even if given away, will not succeed unless the services offered are exciting.

"Content will be a big driver in all of these services. If there's stuff people want they will seek it out. But if it is just a mish-mash without any particular context, that will limit the appeal to the mass market," said David Tee, senior industry analyst at Consultants Sri International.

British police use night vision to catch crooks

By Merissa Marr
Reuter

London — British police hope to give themselves an edge in their fight against crime in the 21st century by adopting military equipment that will let them see in the dark.

At the centre of the revolution are futuristic-looking night-vision goggles (NVGs) which can be used by helicopter pilots to pinpoint the scene of a crime at night and locate offenders hiding in places that police on the ground cannot detect.

The 15,000-pound

(\$23,620) goggles are being tested in the south of England with a view to equipping police forces throughout the country.

"The goggles have drastically improved our effectiveness," said Paul Hannant of Devon and Cornwall Police, who initiated the trials after spending many years as an army helicopter pilot.

"We used our experience in the military and then adapted them for civil use," he told a London conference on night vision.

The goggles, fixed to the pilot's helmet, operate by amplifying the

small amount of light present in a night scene either from stars, the moon or ambient lighting, and have been used extensively by British Air Force pilots in action.

They can be used together with infra-red methods which work by detecting body heat. Infra-red methods are limiting in that images can be viewed only through a monitor on the instrument panel as opposed to constantly as with the goggles.

"The advantage of NVG is that you can see just as much as in daylight at night," said Cap-

tain Peter Ashby, the project pilot for the trials and who has had extensive military experience in using NVGs in the Falklands, Beirut, the Gulf war and Oman.

Police who have used the goggles say they save time spent in getting to an incident, improve safety and the ability to search areas and are cost effective.

In one incident a police officer had been stabbed in the middle of a moor at night, Capt. Ashby said. A helicopter pilot wearing night-vision goggles was able to speed to the incident, scan the area for the

criminal and direct ground police safely to the scene.

Britain is one of a small number of countries to test night-vision goggles for civilian use.

In the United States, some states have tested the goggles both in airborne missions and in incidents by ground officers including anti-drug smuggling operations.

"I expect every police force (in the United States) to be using the goggles in the next five years," said Colonel William Joe Barnes, from Tucson, Arizona, who trains U.S. Police helicopter pilots to use

night-vision equipment.

In Arizona, local police trained to use night vision have become hooked.

"Officers have said to me that they wouldn't be able to do their jobs without them now," said one U.S. Air Force official.

In one case, he said, a policewoman went to a burglary with her dog. After a gun-battle, the burglars shot the dog and hid in a bush. A helicopter pilot equipped with night vision was able to direct back-up police to the scene and tell the policewoman where the robbers were.

The goggles have met opposition from the U.S. air regulatory agency the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) which has attempted to block their use other than by the military, saying they are too dangerous because they can encourage pilots to take unnecessary risks.

Those who have tried the goggles believe they improve safety and should be available to a wider variety of users.

"Law enforcement agencies, firefighters, rescue operations all could do a better job with goggles than without," said U.S. Air Force Lt-

Colonel Arthur Negrette, from Sacramento, California. "The technology is getting very good."

New advances in goggles displayed at the conference in London showed that vision has improved substantially since their early days and the equipment is now becoming more affordable.

Col. Negrette suggested they could also be used for environmental and pollution control. "Managing an oil spill is a 24-hour job and shouldn't be stopped just because it's dark."

Hebron talks get ahead despite recriminations

(Continued from page 1)

violence. "The Palestinian Authority must choose between the path of violence, escalation, incitement and calling for jihad (holy war), and the path of negotiations, dialogue and peace," a cabinet statement quoted Mr. Netanyahu as saying.

The PNA cabinet met later Friday to discuss the Hebron negotiations. In a session that lasted until early Saturday, the ministers accused Mr. Netanyahu of trying to reopen agreements that already been signed.

Israel's previous government had reached agreement with the Palestinians on a Hebron redeployment under which Israeli soldiers would leave 80 per cent of the city of 120,000 Palest-

inians and 450 Jewish settlers. Mr. Netanyahu has said he wanted better security arrangements for the settlers before he ordered the pullback.

The Palestinian cabinet said Saturday it would stick to the signed agreements. "We refuse to change it in any way. We refuse to change even a comma," said a cabinet statement.

The cabinet set Israel was to blame for lack of progress because it tried to renegotiate the agreements. "The Palestinian leadership condemns the Israeli policy of blaming the Palestinians for lack of progress," the statement said.

A poll published Friday in the Yediot Achronot daily suggested that 57 per cent of Israelis believe that an Israeli troop pullback in

Hebron will result in bloodshed between the two sides.

The Hebron settlers are among the most militant in the West Bank, and Hebron is a stronghold of Islamic fundamentalists. Both sides reportedly are hoarding weapons.

Zvi Katzover, "mayor" of the Kiryat Arba settlement adjacent to Hebron, said his settlement had already recruited a force of men who serve in combat units in the army and will be ready to respond in case of shooting from the Palestinian side.

"There are plans and they have positions," Mr. Katzover told Israel television. "They will return fire to the sources of fire."

Nabil Abu Rudaina, a senior adviser to Mr. Arafat, rejected Israeli government charges that the

Palestinian National Council (PNC) had not amended its charter to withdraw phrases denying Israel's right to exist.

He said the entire charter had been cancelled in a PNC vote on April 24.

An Israeli government statement issued Friday, citing 10 alleged Palestinian violations of autonomy accords, said the April 24 vote ordered a commission to draw up a new charter within six months.

The statement said no new charter had appeared, leaving the old charter still in force.

Mr. Abu Rudaina rejected all the charges, and repeated Palestinian allegations that Israel is responsible for 34 violations of the accords.

Talabani links peace with return of revenues

(Continued from page 1)

He expressed readiness to implement an agreement to the two groups reached in September 1995 in Droghda, Ireland, which stipulates withdrawing all arms from Erbil.

Iraq meanwhile, warned Iran to stop interfering in the Kurdish conflict and hinted that Baghdad may provide support to rebel Iranian Kurdish groups.

The government daily Al Jumhuriya, in a direct address to Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, said: "You have helped Talabani prevent

Mr. Barzani from bringing security and stability to the north of Iraq."

"In future, Iraq will not be able to stop Iraqi Kurds giving support to Iranian Kurds if the latter are intent on waging a revolution against" Tehran, added the paper.

Some 1,200 Kurdish refugees fleeing inter-Kurdish fighting in northern Iraq are waiting to cross the border into Iran, joining tens of thousands already seeking refuge there, the Iranian news agency IRNA said.

It quoted the head of the Red Crescent Society in

Sardasht, northwestern Iran, as saying the refugees were gathering at three border areas and blankets, clothing and food had been distributed over the past two days.

"The recent ceasefire between the Baghdad-backed Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan in northern Iraq has provided an opportunity for those who want to escape the fighting to flee the region," IRNA said, based on comments by the Red Crescent's Qasem Hassan-Nejad.

Western relief groups said

on Monday 15,000 new refugees had arrived in Iran since Oct. 8 and that little food or water was available to the refugees, living in cold mountain camps.

There were no recent figures on Kurdish refugees sheltering in Iran, which last month put their number at 65,000.

Iran is home to two million refugees, 1.4 million from Afghanistan and 600,000 from Iraq, making it the world's most important host country, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Government schools to teach Christianity as a religion

(Continued from page 1)

union. Following the meeting Dr. Masri said in a state-

ment to Jordan Television that the teaching of Christianity as a religion will be introduced in government schools adding that the

Christian community in Jordan have decided to endorse the curricula taught in Syrian government schools to be fol-

lowed in Jordan. Only Christian private schools have been teaching their Christian students Christianity as a religion.

Israel says Golan oil drilling project is cancelled

(Continued from page 1)

two months ago.

Haaretz said the Israeli government's deputy legal adviser Menni Mazuz also approved the oil project on the grounds that the Golan was part of Israeli territory since its "annexation."

The National Oil Com-

pany has invested \$1 million in preliminary surveys and hopes to extract a total of two million barrels of oil worth \$24 million, said Haaretz.

Syria is demanding the return of the Golan under any peace deal with the Jewish state, while Mr. Netanyahu has insisted Israel will never give up the plateau.

He has repeatedly called on Syria to restart without any preconditions peace talks that have been on ice since February after a series of Palestinian suicide bombings that killed 58 people in Israel.

French President Jacques Chirac expressed apparent disapproval of the Israeli decision to approve oil drilling on the

Golan.

Asked about the report at a news conference in Beirut on Friday, on the fifth leg of his Middle East tour, Mr. Chirac said: "I don't think it was particularly well chosen to take this initiative but perhaps Mr. Netanyahu has reasons to think otherwise."

The attack, which began on Thursday, appeared to dash hopes of a ceasefire in

Dostum sends his warplanes into action against Taleban

(Continued from page 1)

plains were largely calm on Saturday and said there were few people in local villages left to disarm.

Masood fighters in Bagram, a few kilometres north of the frontline, said two Dostum planes had bombed Taleban forces defending the Fabz Pass on the easternmost road running north from Kabul.

The Taleban offensive in the remote northwest appeared to reflect growing confidence they could handle two foes at once.

A mullah at Kabul's main mosque berated Gen. Dostum as "a former communist and a criminal" on Friday, a day after the Taleban administration said it had evidence Gen. Dostum forces were fighting alongside those of Mr. Masood

on its northern front.

Until now the Taleban have been anxious to avoid Gen. Dostum entering the conflict and have taken pains to emphasise they have no quarrel with him despite his communist past and the more liberal climate of provinces under his control.

The attack, which began on Thursday, appeared to dash hopes of a ceasefire in

Afghanistan's civil war. The conflict has also alarmed its neighbours and other regional powers.

Iran has said it will host a regional conference on the issue on Tuesday, gathering Russia, India, Pakistan, China, Saudi Arabia and Central Asian states. The European Union and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference are also invited.

Pakistan expels Indian embassy employee

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Pakistan ordered the expulsion of an employee at the Indian embassy Saturday, alleging involvement in "espionage activities," the official Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) said.

A.K. Wahi, a non-diplomatic staffer, was caught by the Islamabad police while purchasing information of a "sensitive nature" from his local contact earlier in the day, the news agency reported.

"The Indian spy confessed

that he had been enticing his local contact with offers of lucrative monetary rewards in exchange for sensitive information," APP said.

Mr. Wahi told police he was working as an "agent handler under the cover of the Indian embassy" for the Indian secret service, APP said.

He was released after declaring his identity and handed over to a representative of the Indian high commission (embassy), the report said.

"The Indian agent has been

asked to leave Pakistan within seven days for indulging in activities incompatible with his official status," the agency said.

The action follows a "strong protest" lodged by the Pakistani high commission in New Delhi Saturday against the overnight abduction and arrest of an official at that embassy by the Indian secret service.

In a statement the Pakistan high commission said the non-diplomatic staff member was

dragged into a car late Friday by Indian secret service men in New Delhi and detained in a police station for the night for unspecified reasons.

The unnamed official was abused, beaten and forced to make a statement which was video-taped, the high commission's statement said, adding that the man was handed over to the mission on Saturday. After the police seized his money, wrist-watch and scooter.

مكتبة لاجل

Jordan has become an alternative to Europe and the U.S.
for Arabs in the Middle East seeking advanced medical treatment

'Enormous' potential seen for Jordan's tourism sector

Following is the fourth and last part of the article which highlighted the achievements and shed light on the challenges that face Jordan on the economic front. The article was summarised from a World Bank booklet and presented

By Samir Ghawi

AMMAN — Tourism accounted for approximately 10 per cent of Jordan's gross domestic product in 1994 and 1995 and, if properly managed, an expanded tourism industry can create thousands of new jobs while attracting hundreds of millions in investment dollars and annual income the World Bank says.

Noting that the government has begun work on a series of projects aimed at providing infrastructure and tourism management to support private investment in hotels, restaurants, resorts and recreational facilities, the bank says these steps expanding the capacity at Jordan's most popular tourist areas and providing travellers with star comforts available to them elsewhere in the Mediterranean.

The bank's examination of the tourism sector reads as follows:

In order to help the tourism industry achieve its full potential, the government is accelerating the privatisation process to attract the investment necessary to upgrade facilities and accommodations, while it improves roads and high-

ways and addresses environmental issues.

Jordan's most popular tourist sites — Petra, Aqaba and the Dead Sea — possess fragile ecosystems, and the government is mindful that growth and development within the tourism industry need to be accompanied by sound environmental management and planning.

To help meet these needs, the World Bank is working with the government to develop a tourism project that will support the growth of a competitive, sustainable, and environmentally sound tourism.

The tourism development project will have three basic components: (1) assisting in the formulation of policies and regulations that will increase the role of the private sector within the industry; (2) implementing a priority action plan for Petra, Wadi Rum, Aqaba and the Dead Sea that includes infrastructure investments and environmental protection measures; and (3) providing resources to encourage private investment and development in the Dead Sea tourist area.

The recent peace accord with Israel enhances the potential for tourism as international travellers to tourist sites in Israel and Egypt will be much more likely to take advantage of Jordan's easy accessibility.

In the years ahead, the prognosis for rapid growth within the tourism industry is strong, and the World Bank is pleased to be able to contribute to the sound development of this rich

heritage.

In addition to the tourism field, the World Bank highlighted the health sector and pointed out that a skilled medical community coupled with low surgical and hospital costs and cultural/linguistic affinities have made Jordan an attractive alternative to Europe and the United States for Arabs in the Middle East seeking advanced medical treatment.

Jordanian surgeons working in state-of-the-art facilities like the \$30 million, 150-bed Arab Heart and Special Centre funded by a group of Arab investors perform organ transplants, plastic surgery, and other operations requiring the highest level of skill.

Non-Jordanian Arabs spend tens of millions of dollars annually for Jordanian medical services and costs associated with their visits.

Demand for these services has attracted millions of dollars of investment in new medical facilities annually. Jordan's reputation for quality and low cost for a wide range of medical procedures is growing.

In 1993, over 60,000 Yemenis alone came to Jordan for medical treatment, and thousands of other patients come from Iraq, Egypt, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

Cost comparisons are difficult, but a typical procedure that costs as much as \$14,000 in the United States, averages only \$1,000 in Jordan.

The chief risk now is

over-investment: a careful projection of future foreign demand has not been done, and with about a dozen new public or private hospitals under construction or recently completed, there is potential for serious under utilisation of costly facilities.

The World Bank is providing technical assistance to the government to help it establish a system to match overall public and private investment to the effective demand for physical facilities.

The bank said that despite health care ranking among the best in the Middle East, the continued viability of the health care system in Jordan is threatened by the increasing demands being placed upon it and by persistent deficits within the sector. A high 7.5 per cent of Jordan GDP is devoted to health services.

To help the Ministry of Health address problems that have caused persistent inefficiencies within the system, the World Bank provided it with a \$20 million loan in 1993. This loan brought total World Bank assistance in the health care sector to \$55 million.

World Bank funds will also be used to support a Ministry of Health project that seeks to improve Jordan's health care system through better organisation and management, greater reliance on pre-hospital services, increased training of medical personnel, and the construction of additional hospital emergency rooms.

In addition, a programme is being designed to imple-

ment measures for higher levels of cost recovery that include more effective collection mechanisms.

As a result of this programme, it is expected that the Ministry of Health will be able to contain the rising costs that threaten the system, while medical personnel will be able to provide better quality care that ensure continued access for the financially disadvantaged.

By addressing health care delivery problems before they reach crisis propor-

tions, Jordan and the World Bank are working together to make certain that all citizens continue to receive the high-quality health care to which they are entitled.

The World Bank is also now working with the government to prepare a project which would carry these improvements further. It would help produce more and better services for each health dinar in several ways: health facility managers would be given incentives and flexibility to manage their hospitals and

health centres efficiently.

Public health programmes would be targeted better to the major disease burdens facing the population.

The private sector would be regulated and coordinated with public health services better, cutting down on duplication of expensive new technologies and excess hospital capacity. And pharmaceuticals, which account for over a quarter of health spending, would be procured, stored, and distributed in more cost-effective ways.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson,
Astrologer, Carroll
Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Be more concerned with personal matter today and hold off any career activities until later. Get together later this evening with interesting and progressive individuals who have suggestions for your success in the days ahead.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 21) Take time today to discuss your financial situation with an expert you know who is at leisure. Later this evening can be good if you seek the assistance of knowledgeable person who have advice for your career activities.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Use modern tactics today with the one you love and get good results. Recent acquaintances can bring greater progress later this evening, so take advice and thereby you can become successful in the days ahead.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Get out of that rut today with your mate and plan new ventures together which will bring you closer. A fresh start later this evening will help the relationship to the same state when you first noticed him or her.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Get into outside activities today which can give you greater knowledge of progress in the world. Happiness is yours tonight with your mate and loved ones if you do nothing to make things difficult in their lives.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Forget entertainments today which could prove disappointing to your loved ones and close friends. Get it in touch with fellow associates and plan the next week for there could be career activities which are critical.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Do whatever will make your home more charming to those who live under your roof or special visitors. Take your mate with you to amusements you like and show him or her a good time later this evening.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Don't go visiting persons or places today which can prove depressing to you. Enjoy your home later this evening and invite close friends to have a wonderful time and show that you are happy to see them.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Anything of a practical nature should be dealt with today, so that there aren't any difficulties with career activities or your personal life. Visit your best friends later tonight and show that you do appreciate their assistance.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Don't put your ideas across at this time since they need revision and could be difficult to comprehend. Confer with an advisor later this evening to set you straight with what career activities are critical.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You have some excellent ideas today how to gain your aims, so discuss with an expert just what you have in mind. Get rid of some depressing situation later this evening and thereby you can have a happy time with loved ones.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Study periodicals and pamphlets today which have modern views towards your career activities and make the effort to succeed in your endeavors. Forget that rut which has been hampering you.

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.5205	0.6227	1.2605	113.35	1.3457	1519.85	1.7058	5.1355	
DE Mark	0.6227	1.0000	0.7363	7.4564	0.6554	996.92	1.1216	3.3771	
GB Sterling	1.6058	0.7363	1.0000	161.59	2.1609	2440.58	2.7392	8.2466	
CHF Franc	0.7363	0.1346	0.1346	1.0000	0.0077	0.7030	0.7363	4.6709	
JP Yen	0.0088	1.3457	0.5488	1.1111	1.0000	134.00	150.36	4.5287	
SA Dollar	0.2743	0.2404	0.3659	0.3398	0.1429	1137.56	1.2784	3.8550	
IT Lira	0.0007	0.9998	0.4092	0.0829	1342.46	0.8848	11.22	3.3767	
NL Guilder	0.2036	0.8811	0.3847	0.3342	0.7887	890.73	1.0000	3.0097	
FR Franc	0.1947	0.2959	0.1211	24.5305	22.05	0.2619	33.20	33.2000	

Energy		Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	25.00	24.95		
WTI	24.70	24.65		
Bony	25.00	24.95		
Dubai	24.70	24.65		
U.S. Gas	22.00	22.00		

Mid-East Currencies				
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF
SA Riyal	0.2668	0.4057	0.16605	0.33837
AE Dirham	0.2722	0.24125	0.16995	0.34347
KW Dinar	3.3378	5.07872	2.07857	4.21053
QH Dinar	0.3770	0.35551	1.6518	3.34872
CY Pound	2.1487	3.2671	1.3373	2.7084

Metal Prices			Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	382.5	383		
Silver (oz's)	4.97	4.98		
Platinum (oz's)	382	383		
Al (3 Months)	1435	1438		
Cu (3 Months)	2038	2042		
Zinc (3 Months)	1045	1050		
Lead (3 Months)	738	743		
Ni (3 Months)	7280	7300		

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)						
Period	1-	3-	6-	9-	12-	1-
Cncy	Month	Months	Months	Months	Months	Year
USD	5.25	5.40	5.50	5.62	5.71	
DEM	5.61	5.77	5.82	5.92	6.14	
JPY	0.37	0.37	0.40	0.53	0.59	
DEM	3.03	3.17	3.15	3.12	3.18	
FRF	2.93	3.32	3.39	3.44	3.47	
CHF	5.43	5.54	5.50	5.48	5.48	
ITL	7.66	7.53	7.32	7.13	7.06	

Main Equity Indices						
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low
New York	DOW JONES	6007.02	14.54	0.24	6020.44	5981.88
Nikkei	SAF 300	700.82	0.37	0.05	704.17	700.53
London	FT-SE 100	4022.4	23	0.58	4023.3	3981.8
Paris	CAC 40	2162.4	10.81	0.5	2168.4	2143.79
Frankfurt	DAX	2874.22	12.27	0.43	2878.86	2863.37

Energy			Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/b)	124.83	Spot		
Cocoa (c/b)	1437	Spot		
Sugar (c/b)	325	Spot		
Wheat (c/b)	168	Spot		
Soy (c/b)	22.07	Spot		
Barley (c/b)	23	Spot		
Rice (c/b)	270	Spot		

JOD Cross Rates			Buy	Sell
Currency				
US Dollar	0.708	0.710		
GB Sterling	1.1346	1.1403		
DE Mark	0.4654	0.4677		
CHF Franc	0.6699	0.6837		
FR Franc	0.1376	0.1383		
JP Yen	0.0079	0.0082		
NL Guilder	0.4149	0.417		
IT Lira	0.4856	0.4878		

Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

Saddam tells Iraqi ministers to cut spending

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein told cabinet ministers discussing the 1997 budget to make better use of resources and cut spending, state newspapers have said.

"The efficient performance of the economy which is equal to defending Iraq, depends on reducing expenditure and the rational use of resources," President Saddam was quoted as saying at the Sunday meet-

ing. The papers did not report any figures.

Iraq has been crippled by six years of trade sanctions imposed for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. High state spending on infrastructure projects and subsidies to farmers has also fuelled inflation.

After President Saddam last December ordered ministers to improve the economy, the government raised prices for pub-

lic utilities and urged ministries to spend only funds they generated.

The government measures were partly meant to strengthen Iraq's battered currency.

The dollar slipped early this year to 3,000 against the U.S. dollar but when Iraq agreed to talks with the United Nations on an "oil-for-food" deal the dollar surged to 450. The deal allows Iraq to sell \$2 billion worth of oil every six months

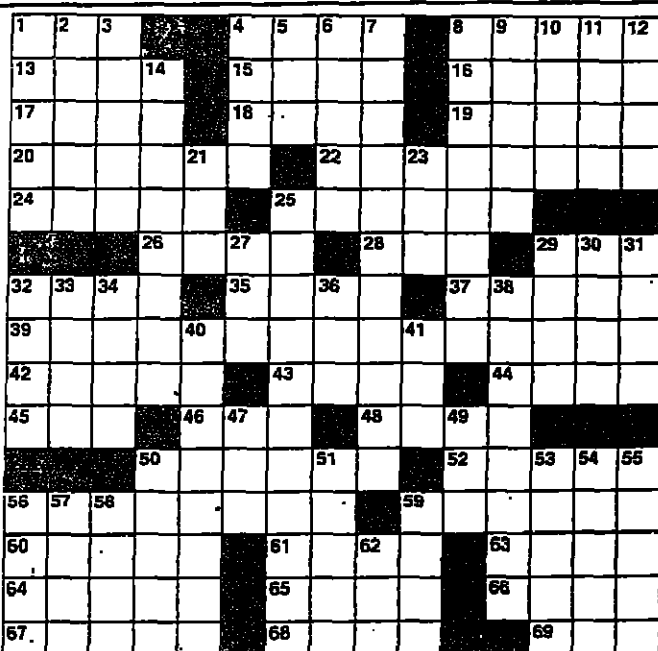
to buy food and medicine.

However, delays in implementing the pact signed in May have weakened the dinar again. The dinar fell to 1,800 against the dollar on Monday, down from 1,500 a week ago.

Iraq's central bank early this month allowed official banks to sell hard currency for dinars in a bid to improve confidence in the dinar. It stabilised for a few days then started sinking again.

THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
- Health resort
 - May or Ann
 - Indian soldier
 - Serving piece
 - Steven's partner?
 - Avoid adroitly
 - Maturing device
 - Look through
 - Sultry Sophia
 - Type of task
 - Some plants
 - Collector's item
 - Medium's session
 - Bill of fare
 - as a Stranger
 - Gator's cousin
 - Instant
 - Variety of oil
 - Enters the Kentucky Derby
 - Deliver the keynote
 - Bedding
 - Starlet's quest
 - Love one's tail
 - Alphabet run
 - Ess and Red
 - Patron taken
 - Soaper
 - Ache structure
 - Nicknurs
 - He who leers
 - "Pich"
 - playwhi
 - NC college
 - Establish as fact
 - Holiday sing
 - Be excessively fond
 - Overfilled
 - Money
 - Society page word



by Alan Olschwang

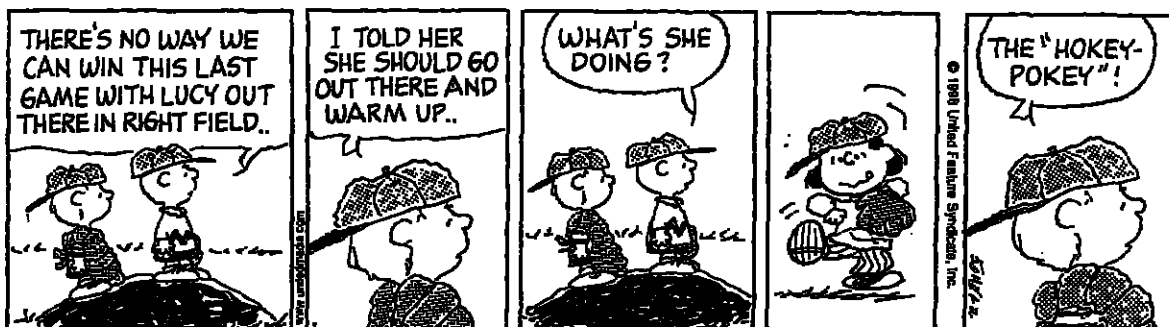
BALD	PLEAD	SALK
ELITE	RANGE	IRON
SOAP	EVITA	TALE
SITRAPPED	DOUBLE	
ROAD	ABBA	
PAIRTYLY	BREATHIER	
ANIME	FLA	IONE
GIVE	SILANT	OUTS
ATEN	CENT	ONSET
NATTERED	PACERS	
SPAT	TARIO	
BLANTAM	GUNSMITH	
OLEO	BRINE	EDIE
OMAR	LABEL	DEER
KIATE	EWERS	YARD

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- DOWN
- Stings
 - British surgeon
 - State
 - Type of egg
 - Brag
 - Nimbus
 - Native of suff.
 - Soak up the rays
 - Ham it up
 - Address Adoree of old
 - Rear innard

JORDAN TIMES
TEL:
684311 — 699634

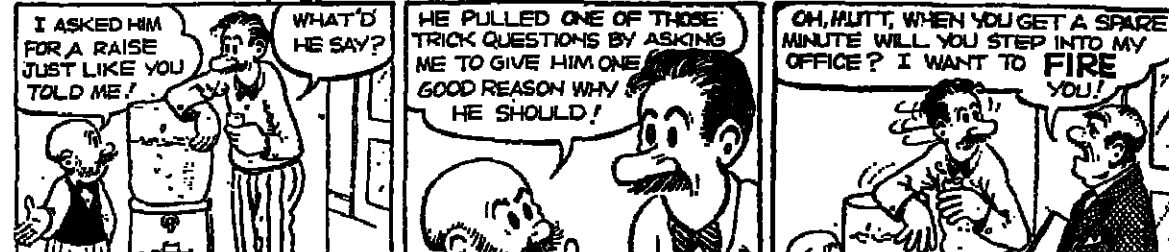
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



Swiss group back in Egypt cement after 35 years

CAIRO (R) — Swiss cement group Holderbank, a major player in the Egyptian cement industry from 1927 until nationalisation in 1961, is returning to cement production in the country with a \$7.5 million investment in a plant under construction east of Cairo.

The Egyptian Cement Company (ECC) said in a statement that Holderbank was adding 50 million pounds to the capital of ECC, a private-sector firm in which the major shareholder is the local family-dominated group Orascom.

The 50 million raises ECC's total capital to 250 million pounds and Holder-

bank will buy the shares at a premium of 15 per cent over the nominal value, making the total investment 57.5 million pounds.

The ECC cement plant, which lies between Cairo and the eastern town of Suez, will have a capacity of 2.8 million tonnes a year on two dry process lines. The first line, supplied by Krupp Polysius, will start production in 1998.

The statement said that after nationalisation of its Egyptian production operations in 1961, Holderbank focused on consulting, training and management assistance.

Investors invited to operate Hammamat Ma'in

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordan Tourism and Spa Complex Company late last week issued a proposal to foreign investors to assume management and leasing of the beleaguered Hammamat Ma'in, the hot sulfurous mineral water springs near the Dead Sea.

According to Mohammad Bataineh, head of the Jordan Investment Corporation (JIC), the Jordan Tourism and Spa Complex Company's board of directors will begin accepting pre-bids in December in an effort to begin bailing the company out of its approximately JD13 million debt and to stem the enterprise's growing annual losses, now estimated at a cumulative JD9.68 million over the last seven years and which have consumed the entirety of

the company's JD5 million capital.

According to the current companies law, a company losing 75 per cent or more of its capital is obligated to liquidate unless the general assembly of the company increases and restructures the capital. However, said Mr. Bataineh, the company's board of directors and shareholders decided that "the best way for us to straighten things out is for foreign investors to lease the facility."

The proposal, constructed under the advice of the World Bank, allows for a leasing period of 20 to 25 years conditional on a \$1 million annual payment and a ten per cent share of profits exceeding JD200,000.

The medicinal value of the area has meant that the spa village is usually never at a loss for patrons. And business at Ma'in village

has been improving over the last two years, said Mr. Bataineh. In 1995, the hotel averaged nearly 40 per cent occupancy (compared to 29-30 per cent in past years), and the company registered an increase in working profits of 56 per cent. But, said Mr. Bataineh, the company has been forced to such financial straits for several years.

Mr. Bataineh, who also serves as chairman of the board of the Jordan Tourism and Spa Complex company, said that several factors have contributed to the company's poor financial situation. The Jordan Tourism and Spa Complex Company was founded in 1982 with a capital of JD2 million, which was then raised to JD5 million in 1983.

"At that point, we thought

that the total investment would be somewhere in the area of JD8-9 million," he said, "but in 1986 as construction continued, it found that much more was needed because the area had not been properly surveyed prior to the outset of the project." At that point the government guaranteed a loan to keep the project moving.

According to Mr. Bataineh, total investment in the spa complex today amounts to JD14 million.

The board of directors has been looking for a management hotel to take over the facility, said Mr. Bataineh, but that option was also found to be too expensive to consider.

"Most companies wanted nearly \$4 million (annually) to do that," he said. "And with the debt, we

can't do anything to attract foreign investment."

The Jordan Investment Corporation, which holds 78 per cent of the equity in the spa company, is a government agency charged with the divestment of government properties. In the last year and a half, it has released the government's share in a number of tourism enterprises — including the Amman Marriott and the Jordan InterContinental — to the private sector. Although selling the facility had been considered, it was not found to be a feasible option, he said.

"The land is government-owned and leased to the Ma'in Spa — we found that we couldn't sell the facility without selling the land, and we, as a company couldn't sell the land," Mr. Bataineh indicated. Additionally, the compa-

ny's dire finances have limited the company's options in improving facilities at Ma'in Spa Village that would allow it to generate more revenue.

Additionally, he said, the company has been pushing for the construction of a road connecting Ma'in to the Dead Sea to provide easier transportation between the two. "We would be able to attract a lot more people if it were easier to get from one place to the other," said Mr. Bataineh. "Our plan was to have several chalets at the Dead Sea so that people could spend the afternoon at the sea and return to the hotel in the evening."

The company's operational profit for 1993,94 and 95 stands at JD900,000, which, says Mr. Bataineh, "does not allow for anything like that."

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

New telephone charges to take effect from Jan. 1, 1997

** THE NEW telephone charges will take effect from Jan. 1, 1997. Walid Dweik, the director-general of the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC), has announced. He said the committee preparing the executive measures to implement the new telephone charges were still working at the Royal Scientific Society to undertake all the necessary programme changes before actually starting the new charges.

The new charges would regard national calls within the governorate as local calls and would reduce national calls for all government rate to a unified charge of 41 fils per minute. Night tariffs will be applied to national calls on Fridays and national holidays.

International calls will be charged 20 per cent less on the average as the board of directors will specify the charges with each country according to bilateral agreements. The reduced night charges, which are 30 per cent less than day charges, will also apply during Fridays and national holidays for all international calls (Al Aswaj).

Minister sees need to create 50,000 new jobs each year to prevent unemployment from rising

** ACCORDING TO Labour Minister Abdul Hafez Al Shakhaneh, 50,000 new jobs must be created each year to maintain the unemployment rate at its current level. He indicated that the number of non-Jordanian workers who hold permits to work in agriculture was about 34,000 labourers but the actual number of workers in this category exceeds 100,000 persons. The minister stressed the importance of small projects in creating jobs and indicated that there are plans to reduce recurrent and handouts and to move towards rehabilitation projects so as the aid handout would be given to only those who are unable to work.

Dr. Shakhaneh said that the issue at stake now was how to harmonise between academic graduates and the labour market. He pointed out that civil service employment is non-existent in 1997 noting that the problem in the public sector is in the salaries not being sufficient. Such a situation requires that priority be given to improve the situation of civil servants employed in various government institutions.

The minister urged all Jordanian workers to accept whatever work available in the market. He revealed that there is an "ambitious" plan to transform the Ministry of Labour to a Ministry of Labour Forces (Al Aswaj).

Israel's El Al faces 'catastrophic' November

TEL AVIV(R) — November is shaping up to be the worst month for El Al Israel Airlines since the 1991 Gulf war, officials at the state-owned carrier have said.

Spokesman Nachman Klieman said the airline would be likely to carry 16,000 fewer passengers in November than originally projected. That would be 12 per cent below original projections and eight per cent fewer passengers than in November last year.

"The situation is a catastrophe and is becoming worse. Until the opening of the tunnel it appeared there was an improvement but now there is again a decline," vice president for marketing Jacob Yaron said at a seminar on tourism.

Israel's opening of an archaeological tunnel near Muslim holy sites in occupied East Jerusalem last month sparked gunbattles between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers, killing more than 70 people and heightening tensions between the two sides.

The recent violence was a heavy blow for the tourism industry, which had placed great hopes on Middle East peace as a spur to increased foreign tourism.

This year alone the industry has been pummeled by a wave of suicide bombings in February and March, fighting between Israel and Hizbollah guerrillas based in Lebanon in April and the recent TWA jet crash in the United States.

Mr. Yaron said the crisis encompasses all sectors of tourism, with cancellations from both American Jews and Christian pilgrims.

Mr. Klieman said December, an important month for Jewish and Christian tourism, was still a question mark. "We could see people waiting to see what will happen and reserve at the last minute," he said.

UAE to build first steel plant

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is planning to build its first steel plant to face growing domestic demand and slash imports from Asia and other countries, newspapers have reported.

The project in Abu Dhabi has a capacity of 500,000 tonnes per year and will cost around 350 million dirhams (\$95.3 million).

"We have issued tenders for this important project, which will primarily target the local market," said Issa Atiq, director general of the state-controlled General Industry Corporation (GIC).

He gave no details of the project but industry sources said it would be financed by GIC and private investors from the Emirates.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHMEISANI
 TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 26/10/1996

PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
1.250 5.280 3.040 1.200 4.180 2.800 1.640	.880 4.350 2.950 .890 3.300 3.000 1.000	MID-EAST INV.BK. THE HOUSING BK. JOR. KUNAIT BANK JOR. GULF BANK JOR. ISLAMIC BANK JOR. INV. FID. BANK PHILADEL. INV. BK.	70.9 12.8 18.8 5.4 18.0 17.4 9	0.00 2.88 0.00 7.78 0.00 0.00 0.00	33 2 1 7 4 2 6	26400 450 400 23700 1450 6000 6250	28639 2160 2160 21330 5438 15250 8563	1.08 4.80 2.60 .90 3.75 3.25 1.37	1.08 4.80 2.60 .90 3.75 3.21 1.37	- - - - - -04- -
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 190.34 %CHG: -0.03										
2.870 2.910	2.500 1.990	UNITED INSURANCE JOR FRENCH INSUR.	11.4 5.6	4.32 10.15	1 1	250 250	695 493	2.65 1.99	2.78 1.97	-.13 -.02
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 118.86 %CHG: -0.10										
1.900 2.050 1.050 1.260 3.660 1.340 2.430 1.220	1.450 1.080 .880 .590 3.130 .960 1.700 .820	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR. MATL. PORTFOLIO REAL ESTATE INV. JORDAN INTL. TRAD. ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC. SARFA EDUCATION UNITED CO. UNION LAND DEV.	11.1 9 20.2 33.9 13.9 18.0 9.2 5	7.50 0.00 4.10 0.00 5.68 0.00 5.71 0.00	7 14 2 5 4 9 3 1	1202 8250 250 1650 9250 7850 600 750	1923 6323 228 1089 32560 8881 1045 663	1.60 1.24 .89 .66 3.52 1.14 1.75 1.91	1.60 1.20 .89 .68 3.52 1.13 1.75 1.91	- -04- - - - -01- - -
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 111.64 %CHG: -0.09										
3.770 5.960 10.880 4.670 6.450 5.800 960 1.500 1.090 1.870 1.150 3.280 2.100 1.580 2.460 1.490	3.050 4.780 8.750 3.100 5.650 3.120 .450 1.060 .620 1.040 .830 1.510 1.140 .890 1.750 1.050	JOR. CEMENT FACT. ARAB POTASH CO. JOR. PETROL. REFINERY ARAB PHARM. MANF. JOR. CERAMIC IND. ARAB ALUM. IND. LIVESTOCK & POULTRY ARAB PAPER CONV. TRD. NATIONAL TRDS. INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM. JOR. ROCKWELL INDUS. UNIV. MODN. INDUS. JOR. IND. RESOURCES JOR. NEW CABLE CO. EL "RAY READY WEAR EWIL. TOBACCO	19.2 16.8 9.2 18.6 7.5 8.7 9 8.2 9.0 9 9 4.6 17.2 24.7 7 26.1	2.99 3.60 8.76 5.92 4.12 8.57 0.00 8.63 5.84 0.00 0.00 13.33 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00	18 1 9 16 1 3 62 1 27 6 11 13 8 16 5	7665 250 4290 6388 100 125 106500 100 12200 4350 100 3450 8550 10750 7750 2000	25469 1388 6160 21575 607 435 67803 120 7267 4495 87 5179 7642 9783 14137 2223	3.30 5.95 9.13 3.42 6.07 3.50 1.60 1.20 1.07 .98 1.52 1.41 1.91 1.79 1.12	3.35 5.95 9.13 3.38 6.07 3.50 1.20 1.20 1.05 .97 1.50 1.38 1.84 1.84 1.11	-.05+ - -.03+ -04- - - -03- - -.01- -02- -01- -02- -03- -01- -01-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 110.98 %CHG: +0.23										
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 148.75 %CHG: +0.07										
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 26/10/1996										
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+ : New 12 months low
 N : Listed during the past 12 months
 P : P/E ratio is 100 or more
 - : Negative P/E
 E : Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen

"I made this brochure. It lists all my positive qualities in case you forget."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME!
by Henri Arnold and Mike Argenton

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CARPH
LOXET
AMOWED
CLOWAL

THE INSTALLER'S SHODDY WORK GOT HIM THIS.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: ON THE LINE

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: LYRIC ALIVE BABIED INFECT
Answer: This happened to the eye doctor who was following too close - HE WAS NEAR "CITED"

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Becker to clash with Sampras in Stuttgart final

STUTTGART (R) — Australian Open champion Boris Becker proved he is back to his best form after a serious wrist injury with an impressive 6-4, 6-3 victory over Michael Chang in the Stuttgart Open semifinals on Saturday.

Becker played some superb tennis from the front and the back of the court against the world No. 2 to move towards a fascinating showdown with Pete Sampras in Sunday's final of the prestigious tournament.

In the first semifinal world No. 1 Sampras stretched his unbeaten run to 21 matches with a comfortable 6-3, 6-4 victory over unseeded Dutchman Jan Siemerink.

Becker was forced to abandon his campaign at this year's Wimbledon, his favourite tournament, after hurting his wrist and still needs painkillers for the injury.

The German came to his native Germany this week needing some good results to make sure of a place at next month's season-ending World Championship which is also being held on his home turf in Hanover.

But the three-times Wimbledon champion, who won the world title last year, has played out of his skin in front of his fanatical home supporters and is now almost certain of a place in the Hanover event which brings together the top eight players in the world.

First comes the clash with Sampras, a repeat of the 1995 Wimbledon final which the American won in four sets.

Sampras knows that Becker is a formidable opponent on his home soil although the American won their last clash in straight sets at the World Championship in Frankfurt last year. Becker has not beaten him for nearly two years.

"He is going to be tough to beat, especially indoors," Sampras said. "Add the crowd to that and he seems to thrive on that. He is one of the best indoor players I have ever played."

Chang, the second seed, played some brilliant returns to Becker's feet at times. But the German served superbly and hit some blistering groundstrokes as well to the delight of the 7,000 crowd.

Sampras, who has won his last three tournaments



Boris Becker of Germany fixes the ball during his match at the Stuttgart Open (Reuters photo)



Magnus Gustafsson of Sweden sits dejected during his quarter-final match against Boris Becker of Germany at the ATP tournament in Stuttgart (Reuters photo)

including the U.S. Open and is unbeaten indoors this year, took 79 minutes to clinch his place in the final. The winning streak is the second longest of his career.

Barmby, Fjortoft for sale

LONDON (R) — Middlesbrough manager Bryan Robson confirmed Friday he is ready to sell England striker Nick Barmby — just 14 months after signing him for 5.25 million pounds (\$8.38 million).

Speculation is mounting that Barmby, who joined Middlesbrough from Tottenham, could join Leeds in a swap deal that would take Lee Sharpe to Middlesbrough where he would link up with Robson, a former Manchester United team mate.

Sharpe only joined Leeds in the close-season for 4.5 million pounds (\$7 million).

Robson said he had decided the balance of his team was not right with Barmby and Brazilian international Juninho having similar roles.

"I thought I could play the two behind the striker but it has not worked out. We have been overpowered too many times in too many games," said Robson.

"I think Barmby has a big future in the game. He is a top player and a good professional. I have looked at the situation and a Barmby move is best for both parties."

"Barmby has been linked with a number of clubs but so far I have received no offers. If I get a good offer that will further his career I will look at the situation," said Robson.

Barmby was the club's leading scorer last season but has only scored once this season.

Robson is also prepared to listen to offers for Norwegian international Jan-Aage Fjortoft, who has not played in the Premier League this season.

Fjortoft said: "This has been a frustrating season for me, especially as I have lost my international place."

"I cannot complain about that because I have not been playing first-team football. I must get back on the big stage before I can play for my country again."

Robson said that first division Portsmouth had made several inquiries for Fjortoft without putting in an offer.

Hoddle thinking over Gascoigne's selection

LONDON (R) — England coach Glenn Hoddle will decide next week whether to name Rangers midfielder Paul Gascoigne in his squad for the World Cup qualifier in Georgia on November 9.

The 29-year-old Gascoigne's place in Hoddle's thinking for the game in Tbilisi was thrown into doubt after last week's revelations about his continued marital problems.

Gascoigne's temperamental character and his frequent inability to control himself on the pitch were also shown when he was sent off for kicking out at Ajax defender Winston Bogarde during Rangers' 4-1 Champions' League defeat in Amsterdam last Wednesday.

Ibrox chief Walter Smith suggested that Gascoigne's off-the-pitch problems were possibly having an effect on his performances and mental state, and even though the player apologised for his behaviour against Ajax, Hoddle announced last week that he would be speaking to him.

That conversation took place on Wednesday but in an official statement issued on Friday the English F.A.

announced that the coach would make a final decision on whether to include Gascoigne in the squad he announces on Thursday at some stage after the weekend.

The statement read: "Glenn Hoddle and Paul Gascoigne met together privately on Wednesday. They discussed Paul's problems and what he is seeking to do about them."

"Glenn is aware that among other things Paul is receiving counselling which will continue."

"Glenn Hoddle's intention is to seek to do what is right for the England team as well as for Paul and his family."

"He will have further contact over the next few days with Paul as well as with Rangers manager Walter Smith."

Even though Hoddle conceded Gascoigne had not been at his best in the 2-1 win over Poland two weeks ago he has made clear his view that Gascoigne is very much at the forefront of his thinking in the run up to the 1998 World Cup and beyond.



Fabien Leclercq (R) of Lille and John Collins (L) of Monaco fight for the ball during early action in their French league match (Reuters photo)

Big-scoring Auxerre and Monaco close in as leaders slip

PARIS (AFP) — French first division leaders Paris St. Germain crashed to their first defeat of the season on Friday when they were beaten 2-1 at Rennes — enabling Monaco and Auxerre to close the gap at the top of the table.

Stephane Guivarch scored both of the Rennes' goals to stay top of the first division goalscoring charts on 12 — international goalkeeper Bernard Lama, who had not conceded a goal all season, making a disappointing return from injury for the visitors.

Guivarch's first goal was from the penalty spot in the 69th minute after he had been pushed off the ball inside the area by Jimmy Almerino. He then headed home his second from a long, inch-perfect pass from Ousman Dabo before Patrice Loko scored a consolation goal for the visitors in the dying seconds.

Despite the defeat, Paris St. Germain, who have 29 points from 14 matches, remain three points clear of Monaco and four points ahead of Auxerre.

Both took their chances in devastating style. Monaco came away 4-1 winners from Lille and Auxerre handed out a humiliating 7-0 lesson to visiting Lyon.

Scottish international John Collins produced another impressive midfield display for Monaco and also got among the scorers

when he found space to rifle home Monaco's third goal in the 68th minute.

The other Monaco goals came from Brazilian Sonny Anderson (21), Nigerian Victor Ikpeba (56) and promising youngster Thierry Henry (89). Lille's goal came from a 72nd minute penalty slotted home by Miladin Bećanović.

Champions Auxerre gave Lyon goalkeeper and captain Pascal Olmeta a nightmare match with Thomas Deniaud (4), Bernard Diomede (47), Moussa Saib (63, 78), Steve Marlet (69), and Lepaul (87) all getting on the scoresheet. The other Auxerre goal came when unhappy Lyon defender Jean-Luc Sassus who deflected the ball into the net.

Elsewhere there were several unexpected away victories.

Lens came away 1-0 winners from Bastia, Le Havre beat Metz 2-1, Guingamp inflicted a 1-0 defeat on Caen and Nantes scored a 1-0 success at Marseille.

The latest defeat of Marseille, who crashed to a goal five minutes from time by Da Rocha and who have now won only four of 14 matches, prompted some ugly incidents between home supporters and riot police.

After the final whistle frustrated Marseille fans threw metal barriers and other missiles at the police who responded with teargas.

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Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ K 4 3
♥ A K Q 8
♦ 10 5
♣ Q 8 7 3

EAST
♠ 8 5 5
♥ 2
♦ J 10 8 2
♣ 8 7 6

WEST
♠ 9 4 3 2
♥ K 4 2
♦ A Q J 10 7 6
♣ A K

SOUTH
♠ A Q J 10 7 6
♥ K 4 2
♦ A K
♣ A

The bidding:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1♠ Pass 2♠ Pass
3♠ Pass 4NT Pass
5♠ Pass 5NT Pass
6♠ Pass

Opening lead: Queen of ♣. South's grand slam was into a bad luck. Instead of simply ruffing at ♠ 10, declarer took an early auction that brought home the ♣ ace.

♠ South were lucky to miss the ♠ heart fit. As the cards lie, the ♠ break does not that grand slam is not thrilled with the way ♠ with bid the hand. Had

Uche and Okocha to become Turks

ISTANBUL (R) — Nigerian footballers Uche Okechukwu and Augustine "Jay Jay" Okocha who play for Istanbul club Fenerbahce, are planning to become Turkish citizens and change their names.

The players' new names will be Abdulkarim Rahim Uche and Muhammed Yavuz Okacha, club spokesman Turgut Acar said on Friday.

Fenerbahce, due to play their return match with Manchester United in the European Champions' League on Wednesday night, have persuaded the pair to become Turks to enable the club to purchase two new foreign players next season, Acar said.

Vatanen wins last ever Hong Kong-Beijing Rally

BEIJING (AP) — Ari Vatanen of Finland on Friday became the first and last -person to win the 555 Hong Kong-Beijing Rally twice.

After a gruelling 3,800 kilometres, just 43 seconds separated Vatanen from second-placed Richard Burns of Britain.

Both men drove Mitsubishi Lancers, as did third-placed finisher, Kenjiro Shinozuka, completing a 1-2-3 sweep for Mitsubishi in the last ever Hong Kong-Beijing Rally.

The rally, first held in 1985, will be run in a different format next year, along World Rally Championship lines.

Of 52 cars that left Hong Kong last Saturday, 23 made it to the finish Friday on Beijing's Tiananmen Square, having covered some of China's most gruelling terrain and raced near the great wall.

"To finish this event at Tiananmen Square is a very, very fitting end to an important moment in rallying history," said Vatanen, who also won in 1993 and led this year's seven-day race from day four.

He completed 26 special stages totalling 484.75 kilometres in 5 hours, 1 minute and 27 seconds.

TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL:634144 PHILADELPHIA Philadelphia 1 Tom Cruise ... in MISSION IMPOSSIBLE Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 Philadelphia 2 SABRINA Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL:699238 PLAZA Ahmad Zaki & Yusra...in WHIMS (Arabic) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL:677420 CONCORD CONCORD "1" UP CLOSE & PERSONAL Shows: 3:30, 8:30 THE SCARLET LETTER Shows: 12:30, 6:15, 10:30 CONCORD "2" NASER 56 Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:45	Amman Theatre & Cinema TEL: 618274 - 618275 Today presents Zawad Weld Awad theatre group in the play entitled Five-Star Government Starring comedians: Mahmoud Saimah & Hussein Tubishat Play starts 8:30 p.m.	Nabil & Hisham's Theatre TEL: 625155 PRESENTS THE SATIRICAL COMEDY Arab Human Rights At 8:30 p.m. For reservation please call 625155 - 640155

Sacchi's future in doubt again

ROME (R) — The likely future president of the Italian Soccer Federation was quoted Saturday as saying he would make a "painful decision" by the end of 1996 regarding the future of national coach Arrigo Sacchi.

Luciano Nizzola, head of the league and expected to be elected federation chief next December, said he would have to make a "problematic and painful decision" about Sacchi.

"We cannot play England in our World Cup qualifier next February unless we have some peace of mind, so the coaching question must be settled by then," Nizzola was quoted as saying in Gazzetta dello Sport newspaper.

"Qualifying for the World Cup will be hard and we must do all we can to ensure Italy make it," said Nizzola, considered the inevitable successor to Antonio Matarrese, who was Sacchi's mentor before being ousted himself after Euro 96.

The federation elects its next president on December 14.

Gazzetta, Italy's leading sports daily, said Nizzola's comments indicated he was already thinking of a successor to Sacchi, whose side were knocked out in the first round of this year's European Championship in England.

The paper said Nizzola's first choice as new coach would be Lazio president and former Italy goalkeeper Dino Zoff. It said former Parma trainer Nevio Scala and under-21 coach Cesare Maldini were also in the running.

Sacchi, who led Italy to the 1994 world cup final against Brazil, was given a new contract just before Euro 96.

He refused to resign after Italy crashed out of the tournament, and the contract, which expires after the 1998 World Cup finals, is the main reason he has not been sacked.

Worth more than a million dollars a year after tax, the federation knows it would be economic madness to dismiss Sacchi, pay him off, and pay his successor.

WBC grants extension for Lewis-McCall bout date

BUENOS AIRES (AP) — The WBC decided to extend until Jan. 26 a deadline to set a date and venue for a heavyweight title bout between Britain's Lennox Lewis and Oliver McCall of the United States.

The decision, reached Thursday on the next-to-last day of the WBC's annual convention, ruled out reports that the organization planned to drop McCall and replace him with Britain's Henry Akinwande.

The Lewis-McCall fight had originally been planned for Dec. 7, but the deadline will now be extended 30 days, the WBC board ruled.

The heavyweight crown is currently vacant as Mike Tyson gave up his WBC title because a new jersey court had ordered him to fight Lewis. He had won the title by knocking out Britain's Frank Bruno last March.

Don King productions has won the right to promote the Lewis-McCall fight with a \$9.15 million bid. Losing out were main events at \$6.15 million and Cedric Kushner productions at \$5.2 million.



Germany's Katja Seizinger is on her way through snowfall and fog to win the first World Cup race of the season, a women's Giant Slalom on the Rettenbach glacier near Soelden in Austria's Tyrol province October 26. Seizinger clocked an overall time of 2:11.81 minutes (Reuters photo)

Seizinger wins opening World Cup giant slalom

SOELDEN, AUSTRIA (R) — Katja Seizinger of Germany began her defence of the overall World Cup title with a victory in the season's opening race, a giant slalom on Saturday.

Olympic and world champion Seizinger delivered a near-perfect second run in snowfall and foggy conditions to improve from second after the first descent to overall first with an aggregate time of two minutes 11.81 seconds.

Early leader Deborah Compagnoni of Italy had trouble in the upper half of the Rettenbach Piste, flagged with 44

gates in both runs, and fell back to overall second in 2:11.93.

Germany's Hilde Gerg was third in 2:13.84 on the Austrian Glacier at over 3,000 metres altitude.

An overjoyed Seizinger said: "I wasn't expecting this victory. I was very lucky to have performed two good runs on this difficult slope. The bad weather also didn't make it easy."

Saturday's victory was the 24-year-old's 25th in the World Cup.

Confident Sampras remains favourite for Paris Indoor

PARIS (AFP) — World No. 1 Pete Sampras doesn't often fail to defend the major titles he wins — his four consecutive Wimbledon wins and his repeat United States Open triumph this year are eloquent examples of that.

Consequently next week the 25-year-old American will be a hot favourite to retain his crown at the lucrative \$2.5 million Paris Indoor Open inside the grass-walled Bercy Stadium to the south-east of Paris.

Twelve months ago Sampras chalked up his first-ever victory in what has become one of the world's most prestigious indoor tournaments by defeating three-times champion Boris Becker.

This year he goes into the event oozing with confidence after his impressive performances at Stuttgart, where he once again outplayed his old rival Andre Agassi.

After the traumas and trials of what has been a difficult and emotional year — Sampras is now looking forward to finishing off the season in style.

And in the French capital he will be concentrating especially hard on his serve since he has offered to pay \$100 to cancer research for every ace he hits.

In May Sampras lost coach and close friend Tim Gullikson, who had been suffering from brain cancer.

"It has been a difficult year," he admitted, adding: "But now everything has fallen into place. I feel I am playing really well. I have trained hard and feel very fit and I particularly like playing in Paris."

Apart from last year's Bercy success, the French capital had never been a happy hunting ground for the American and his seven campaigns to win the only grand slam title missing from his collection all ended in failure at Roland Garros.

Although happy with his form, Sampras is all too aware that he will not be able to underestimate his opponents in the final championship series event of the season since all of the world's top-ranked players will be taking part.

His first match will be against either big-serving Swiss giant Marc Rosset or Alex Corretja of Spain and, as in Stuttgart, he is again drawn to face Agassi in the quarter-finals. Agassi, winner here in 1994, opens against the winner of a first-round clash between Magnus Gustafsson of Sweden and a qualifier.

Austria's third-seeded iron man Thomas Muster, and sixth-seeded Boris Becker of Germany are also in Sampras' half of the draw.

Muster, who was spat on by spectators and booed off court at last year's tournament after an acrimonious loss to home hero and 1991 champion Guy Forget, faces another tough opener this year since he is drawn to play either former world number-one Stefan Edberg or Germany's Michael Stich.

Edberg, who is retiring at the end of the season and

who will be making a final career appearance in the French capital, could hardly have got a tougher draw although he admitted: "To win tournaments you have to beat the best players."

If he can survive the tough opening rounds, however, anything is possible and a success at Bercy would be a huge boost for edberg who completes his career in next month's Davis Cup final against France.

Becker, winner of this year's Australian Open but still needing match play after missing several tournaments after injuring his wrist at Wimbledon, plays either Britain's talented Tim Henman or Carlos Moya of Spain in his first match.

In the other half of the draw, second-seeded Michael Chang could be facing the awesome power of Mark Philippoussis in his opening clash — providing the big Australian can dispose of Frenchman Lionel Roux. Chang is scheduled to play 15th seed Jim Courier in the third-round and Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek in the quarter-finals.

Sixth-seeded Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia, beaten by in-form Dutch player Jan Siemerink in the quarter-finals at Stuttgart, could get the chance to avenge the defeat in his first tournament match — providing Siemerink beats his first-round opponent and compatriot Paul Haarhuis.

And fourth-seeded French Open champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia, hoping for another major success in Paris following his Roland Garros triumph, launches his campaign against either Frenchman Cedric Pioline or Sergi Bruguera of Spain.

Shearer operation successful

LONDON (R) — World record signing Alan Shearer's groin operation has been hailed "a complete success" and Newcastle are hoping the England skipper might not be sidelined for as long as they first feared.

It was thought that the striker, who moved from Blackburn to Newcastle for a world record fee of £15.0 million pounds (\$24 million) in the close-season, would be out of action for six to eight weeks — ruling him out of England's World Cup date in Georgia on November 9.

A Newcastle spokesman said: "The operation has been a complete success and Alan has recovered from it without any problems. He is now resting at home and he will decide when he is ready to start training again."


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PROGRAMME


1) Sostiene Pereira (Pereira Holds)	22/10	8:00 p.m.
Director: Roberto Faenza	23/10	5:00 p.m.
2) Regalo di Natale (Christmas Present)	23/10	8:00 p.m.
Director: Pupi Avati	24/10	5:00 p.m.
3) Romanzo di un giovane povero (The Story of a Poor Young Man)	24/10	8:00 p.m.
Director: Ettore Scola	25/10	5:00 p.m.
4) Una storia semplice (A Simple Story)	26/10	8:00 p.m.
Director: Ennio Gresio	27/10	5:00 p.m.
5) Per grazia ricevuta (For Favours Received)	27/10	8:00 p.m.
Director: Nino Manfredi	28/10	5:00 p.m.
6) Nemici d'infanzia (Childhood Enemies)	28/10	8:00 p.m.
	29/10	5:00 p.m.

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Chirac's Mideast tour draws flattering London headline

LONDON (Agency) — French President Jacques Chirac's eventful week-long tour to the Middle East sparked a rare — and very flattering — front page headline in French in a respected British broadsheet on Saturday.

"La paix, la justice, l'amitié — et un grand tour de force", were the words emblazoned across the front of the Independent, which translate as "peace, justice, friendship — and an amazing feat".

They were followed by an opinion piece by the paper's veteran Middle East correspondent who noted that Mr. Chirac's tour — during which he defended Arab rights — was "a remarkable week for a French president whose popularity at home is dissolving almost as fast as his stock in the Arab World is sky-rocketing".

The report went on to note that "it is possible — indeed, necessary — to be cynical about Mr. Chirac's motives."

"But nations do not become great unless they behave like great powers. And France — at least in the eyes of millions of Arabs — is becoming great again."

Mr. Chirac arrived back in Paris early Saturday.

Britain has distanced itself from Chirac's current barnstorming in the Middle East, saying the international community should speak as one voice in the region.

Remarks by Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind Wednesday and Thursday coincided with criticism of France's solo bid to become a major player at the negotiating table by European Union (EU) Commission Vice President Sir Leon Brittan, who ruled out a European role in the Middle East peace process.

Mr. Chirac's call for Europe — widely seen here as meaning chiefly France — to co-sponsor peace talks with the United States has also been rebuffed by Washington and Israel, though it was welcomed by the Palestinians and Arab countries.

Mr. Rifkind told the House of Commons Thursday that it was for the Israelis and the Palestinians, if at all possible, to enter into a real dialogue and make substantive progress on the outstanding issues.

Comparing a visit he is to make to the region next month with Mr. Chirac's current high-profile tour, Mr. Rifkind said, he had no intention of launching any spectacular separate initiative.

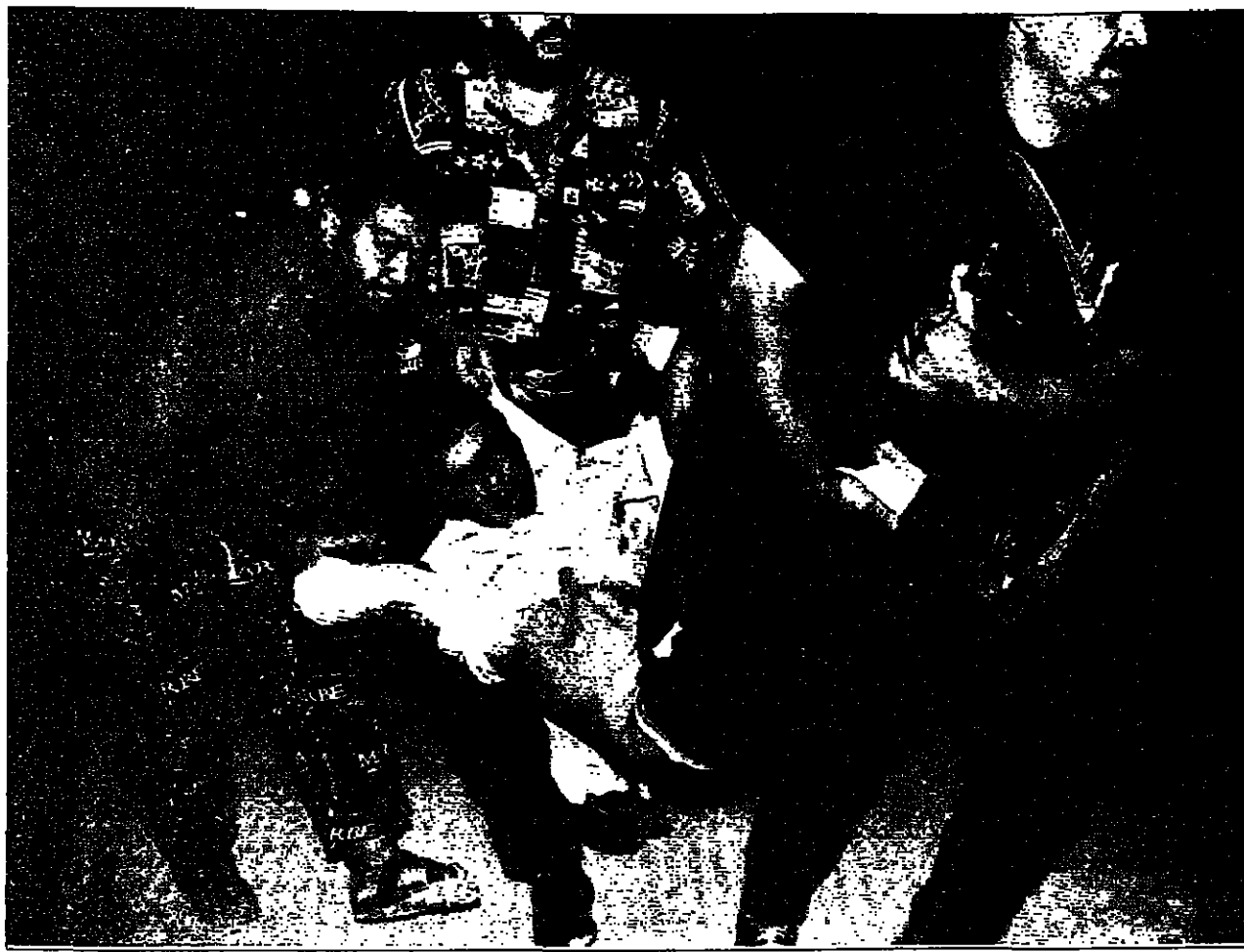
But he acknowledged that France, along with Britain, were with the United States the countries not able to promote the peace process.

Mr. Rifkind told a press conference Wednesday that a "competition of influence in the Middle East between Americans and Europeans was of little benefit for the peace process."

And implied criticism of Mr. Chirac's tactics, he added: "ur involvement may be slightly less romantic, slightly less colourful, slightly less dramatic than that of other, but it may actually be able to make a more positive contribution to the result."

Referring to Mr. Chirac's support of the Arab view, Mr. Rifkind said "we do not intend to be seen as partisan."

Mr. Brittan told the Franco-American association in Paris Thursday that "we do not have the conditions for a concerted European role in the peace process."



Plainclothes Palestinian policemen carry a Jewish settler from a restaurant near the city centre of Jericho late Friday after eleven settlers entered the restaurant and began to pray. The group entered Jericho posing as tourists and were forcibly evacuated when they refused to leave the city (Reuters photo)

Serbs want to ban Muslim, Croat parties from election

BELGRADE (Agencies) — The Bosnian Serbs threatened Saturday to ban parties from the Muslim-Croat federation from taking part in municipal elections in areas they control, the Yugoslav news agency BETA reported.

Dragan Kalinic, the newly-elected head of the Bosnian Serb parliament, told a Serbian radio station that the parties must conform with the laws of the Bosnian Serb entity, BETA reported.

"We think that the parties of the federation cannot take part in local elections if they are not registered in accordance with the laws of the Republika Srpska defining the rights of national minorities, which include Muslims and Croats," Mr. Kalinic was quoted as saying. Mr. Kalinic also criticised the new electoral registration rules for the municipal elections, postponed until early next year.

U.S. demand ignored

The Bosnian government appeared on Saturday to be ignoring a U.S. demand that it fire a defence official seen as close to Iran, a pre-condition for handing over a shipload of U.S. arms for Bosnia's Muslim-Croat federation.

Controversial Deputy Defence Minister Hasan Cengic was still at his post on Saturday, receiving a Turkish military delegation headed by General Ersin Yilmaz, in charge of logistics in the Turkish supreme command.

The reason for Mr. Yilmaz's visit was not immediately clear. In the meantime, a chartered freighter carrying the bulk of

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Rocket car arrives at Al Jafr seeking new speed record

By Yousef Allan

AL JAFR (AP) — The Thrust SSC rocket car arrived Saturday in Jordan, where its driver hopes to set a new world land speed record next month.

A Russian-made Antonov, the world's largest cargo plane, flew the Thrust from Britain to Faisal Ben Abdul Aziz air base in Al Jafr, 300 kilometres southeast of Amman.

The air base is not far from a desert trail where the black and silver, jet-engine-powered Thrust SSC will make its attempt to break the world record after Nov. 15.

The Thrust runs on two Rolls-Royce engines providing 110,000 horse-power. Its aluminium alloy wheels spin at 8,500 rotations per minute.

Test runs will begin Friday, and the goal is to reach record-breaking speeds of up to 1,368 kilometres per hour (kph) within two weeks.

British Richard Noble holds

the current world record of 1019.44 kph in 1983 in Black Rock desert in Nevada. The Thrust will be driven by British air force officer Andy Greene, 50.

The British team's attempt is part of a race against American driver Craig Breedlove, 59, who was hoping to beat the world record last week.

Mr. Breedlove pushed his jet-powered "Spirit of America" to 721 kph just before darkness fell on Wednesday. Then the rain began and winds picked up ahead of a storm that was expected to linger into the weekend.

Mr. Breedlove, who was the world's fastest man five times between 1963 and 1965, is seeking to wrest the title from Mr. Noble and return it to the United States.

Mr. Noble has turned over the driving duties to Mr. Greene.

Jewish settler group evicted from Jericho after illegal prayers

JERICHO (R) — A group of Jewish settlers were carried away by Israeli forces and Palestinian policemen in Palestinian self-ruled Jericho in the West Bank on Friday after they refused to leave the city, witnesses said.

They said nearly a dozen religious Jews, carrying food, blankets and books, entered the Palestinian-ruled city in the evening and began to pray in a park restaurant near the city centre, some two km from an ancient Jericho synagogue.

Restaurant owner Jibrin Al Damanhouri said the settlers had entered his establishment posing as tourists.

"An Israeli professor telephoned me and said a group of French tourists would visit Jericho today and they wanted to eat in my restaurant. I said okay," Mr. Damanhouri told Reuters.

Upon entering the restaurant in the centre of the park, the "tourists" donned Jewish prayer shawls and began conducting prayer services.

Witnesses said Palestinian

police called the local joint Israeli-Palestinian security office for assistance after the settlers refused to leave.

Some 25 Israeli soldiers and police who arrived at the scene, escorted by Palestinian police, asked the settlers to leave but were rebuffed. The Israeli forces then carried the settlers away kicking and screaming.

"They (settlers) were yelling and shouting in Hebrew when the soldiers pushed them into their vehicles," a witness said.

The Israeli army said it was checking the incident.

Israel withdrew its troops from Jericho and handed the city over to Palestinian self-rule under a 1993 peace deal.

Under the accord, Israelis are allowed to visit the 6th century synagogue in Jericho. The synagogue was reopened to Israelis on Friday for the first time since fierce clashes in the west bank and Gaza killed 60 Palestinians and 15 Israelis in September.

Egypt wants 30,000 mosques placed under government control

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt has decided to place 30,000 mosques under the government's control to prevent the propagation of "extremist" ideas, Religious Affairs Minister Mahmoud Hamdi Al Zazouq said in a statement published Saturday.

"The ministry has drawn up a plan to take over 30,000 mosques by the year 2000 at the rate of 6,000 mosques each year," the government daily Al Ahrar quoted Mr. Zazouq as saying.

A recent cabinet meeting stressed the need "to place all mosques under the control of the Ministry of Waqf ... to avoid letting the houses of God become centres for the propagation of extremist ideas," he said.

The government on Wednesday set up a special committee comprising seven cabinet ministers to examine legislative means to face up to the spread of Shiite Muslim ideology in this Sunni Muslim-dominated country.

Mr. Zazouq said 6,500 mosques nationwide have already been placed under the government's control since the beginning of 1996 and that the ministry would appoint 6,500 imams for these mosques.

The religious leaders would be chosen from Al Azhar, the highest authority for Sunni Islam in Egypt.

Egypt said on Monday it had arrested 56 Shiite Muslims linked with Iran who had "begun implementing a plan to flood Egypt with publications and cassettes to spread Shiite thinking."

The network aimed to "infiltrate some political parties and use them to spread Iranian objectives and extremist plans," according to the Egyptian Interior Ministry.

Iran denied any link with the group. Mr. Zazouq last month stressed that Shiite Muslim preachers had no place in Egypt.

"A minority has begun to spread Shiite ideas in Egypt and there will be no place for them within the ranks of preachers in Egypt," the official said, branding Shiite ideology as "deviant and ridiculous."

In September, the authorities arrested Sheikh Hassan Shehata, accusing him of spreading Shiite thought in a private Cairo mosque. The head of Al Azhar, Sheikh Mohammad Sayyid Tantawi, has described the preaching of Mr. Shehata as "very dangerous and very ugly."

3 U.N. oil inspectors arrive in Baghdad

BAGHDAD (R) — Three United Nations oil inspectors arrived in Baghdad to look at oil facilities as part of the delayed deal to allow Iraq to sell limited amounts of oil, a U.N. source in Baghdad said on Saturday.

The inspectors will go to Iraqi oil installations in the south and to the northern town of Zakho, near the Turkish border, to trace the Iraqi-Turkish pipeline that will be used to move the bulk of the oil when the deal goes into effect.

Iraq and the United Nations on May 20 signed an agreement allowing Iraq oil sales worth \$2 billion every six months to buy food and medicine for its people, suffering from stringent U.N. trade sanctions for the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Arrangements to launch the plan stalled when Iraqi President Saddam Hussein sent troops into the country's north at the end of August to help a Kurdish faction fighting a rival.

Since then Iraq has made demands on the arrangements that the United Nations finds unacceptable, while the United States must still approve the oil pricing formula, already endorsed by the other Security Council members.

Some United Nations envoys in New York have said they do not expect the deal to be put into effect for months.

"The aim (of the inspectors' visit) is to check (Iraq's) oil facilities in the south and the north and oil measurement equipment," the source told Reuters.

Egypt's artists union toughens stand

CAIRO (AFP) — The Egyptian Union of Artists will sack any member travelling to Israel until comprehensive peace is achieved in the Middle East and Arab rights secured, its Chairman, Sayyed Radi said on Saturday.

"This decision means that any actor, musician or cinema star who goes to Israel will not be able to work again in Egypt and will be sacked from the union," Mr. Radi told AFP.

"We refuse normalisation with Israel as long as there is no real peace in the region and cultural normalisation will be the last thing to be achieved," he said.

The decision was taken Friday during a general assembly of the 26,000-strong union which groups 17,000 musicians, 5,000 cinema stars and 4,000 actors, Mr. Radi said.

It reflected a toughening in Egyptian-Israeli relations since right-wing Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu was elected prime minister in Israel in May on a hardline platform, and general Arab frustration with the slow pace of progress in peace talks.

Earlier this month Egyptian Culture Minister Faruk Hosni ruled out any cultural normalisation with Israel until there was concrete progress in the Middle East peace process.

"This is not the time for a normalisation (of ties) in the field of culture," Mr. Hosni said, adding that closer cultural ties with Israel was Egypt's "last card."

"But when the peace process advances and relations improve, cultural normalisation will be able to take place," Mr. Hosni said, calling for a just and

comprehensive peace and the recovery by the Arabs of their rights.

Israel has been frustrated by the slow pace of normalisation with Egypt, which became the first Arab country to sign a peace treaty with the Jewish state in 1979.

The Union of Journalists has also warned its members against making any contacts with Israeli officials or members of the media.

In mid-October the Union of Arab Journalists called on all Arab unions "to respect its decision not to normalise ties with Israel in the absence of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East."

It also branded as "a dangerous precedent" recent visits to Israel by Arab journalists.

France indicts Iranian in murder case

PARIS (AFP) — France on Friday indicted an Iranian in connection with the slaying last May near Paris of a Vice-Minister of Culture of the late Shah of Iran, judicial officials said.

Ahmad Jeyhouni was extradited by Germany on Thursday and appeared before a judge Friday to face charges in connection with the killing of Reza Mazlouman, 60, who was shot dead in the Paris suburb of Creteil on May 27.

France had issued an international arrest warrant for Jeyhouni on June 4 following his detention in Bonn at the end of May. Jeyhouni, who runs a sex shop in a Bonn suburb, is suspected of having taken part in the slaying on the orders of the Iranian secret service.

He has reportedly told police that he "paid a visit"

to Mazlouman a few hours before his death, but he denied all involvement in the killing and according to authoritative sources, he has an alibi for the relevant time.

At the time of his visit to Mazlouman, Jeyhouni was reportedly accompanied by another man — and it is this man, who is being sought by police, is thought to have been the killer.

Jeyhouni appeared to have gained influence over Mazlouman, eventually winning his trust, and was thus in a position to let the killer into the victim's house, sources familiar with the case said.

Mazlouman was the eighth Iranian dissident assassinated in France since the 1979 Islamic revolution that toppled Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. A French court earlier this

month sentenced two men to prison terms of seven and three years each for taking part in a surveillance operation aimed at intimidating and killing Iranian dissidents in France at the behest of the Iranian secret service.

The convictions indicated a toughening by the French government towards alleged Iranian infiltrators in France who are suspected of targeting opposition figures, even as Paris maintains what it calls a "critical dialogue" with Tehran.

The French investigation is being led by anti-terrorism Judge Jean-Louis Bruguiere, who investigated the murder of the Shah's last prime minister, Shapour Bakhtiar, in France in 1991. Several Iranians were convicted of the murder two years ago.



Jacko gets warm welcome from Malaysian fans

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Hundreds of Malaysian fans flocked to the international airport in Kuala Lumpur to greet U.S. mega popstar Michael Jackson who arrived in his private jet Saturday on his first trip here. Jackson had been banned from performing last year by Malaysia due to "negative activities linked to such concerns." The pop icon is to hold two concerts here, Sunday and Tuesday, at the Merdeka Stadium in the capital. Dressed in his signature black outfit with a matching hat, Jackson, who was escorted by police officers, waved and blew kisses to about 300 fans who were chanting his name and holding banners to welcome him. The 38-year-old "king of pop" has triggered a mix reaction among Malaysians. While tickets for his concerts were snapped up like hot cakes, about 1,000 university students Friday staged a peaceful demonstration at a mosque in Selangor state in protest of his concerns. Jackson was originally scheduled to perform on Oct. 27 in central Selangor state, but authorities there banned the concert on religious and cultural grounds. Malaysia's cabinet later approved the two Jackson concerts at the 40,000-seat Merdeka Stadium.

Good deed lands grandmother in jail

CINCINNATI (R) — A grandmother who tried to help a stranger by feeding a parking metre wound up in jail instead. "I've never been arrested for anything before," Sylvia Spayton, 62, told reporters Friday as she left Hamilton County Municipal Court, where she was arraigned on charges of obstructing official business and disorderly conduct. She was arrested Thursday evening by a police officer who saw her put coins in an expired metre. She said she did not know who owned the car but thought she would help out. "He started to write a parking ticket after I put the money in the metre," she said. "He said I was interfering with his duties." The dispute landed Ms. Spayton in jail for three hours before family members bailed her out. She was released on a \$1,500 bond. The police-man involved in the case declined comment.

Thousands wooed Pole who posed as woman

WARSAW (R) — She sounded like the answer to Herr Lonelyheart's dreams. Marysia, the attractive, kindly but hard-up doctor, aged 25, searching for friendship and marriage, answered more than 3,000 men who advertised in newspapers for a Polish wife. Back in the post from her mostly German suitors came a flood of presents — sweets, coffee, stockings, panties and money to the tune of \$17,000 and 10,000 German marks. The gifts are still arriving, but the post office is delivering them to the police, who have arrested the author of the letters — a married man of 38 with two sons. News of the scam was published in the weekly newspaper Warsaw Voice and a police spokesman confirmed the general outline of the case Friday. Each of Marysia's pen friends got the same letter and a picture of a model copied from a fashion magazine, said the English-language paper, which, in keeping with Polish legal practice, printed the suspect's name only as "Jerzy K." Marysia worked on a children's hospital ward, liked travelling, aerobics, baking and cooking, was slim, athletic, calm, patient, kind and cheerful.

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